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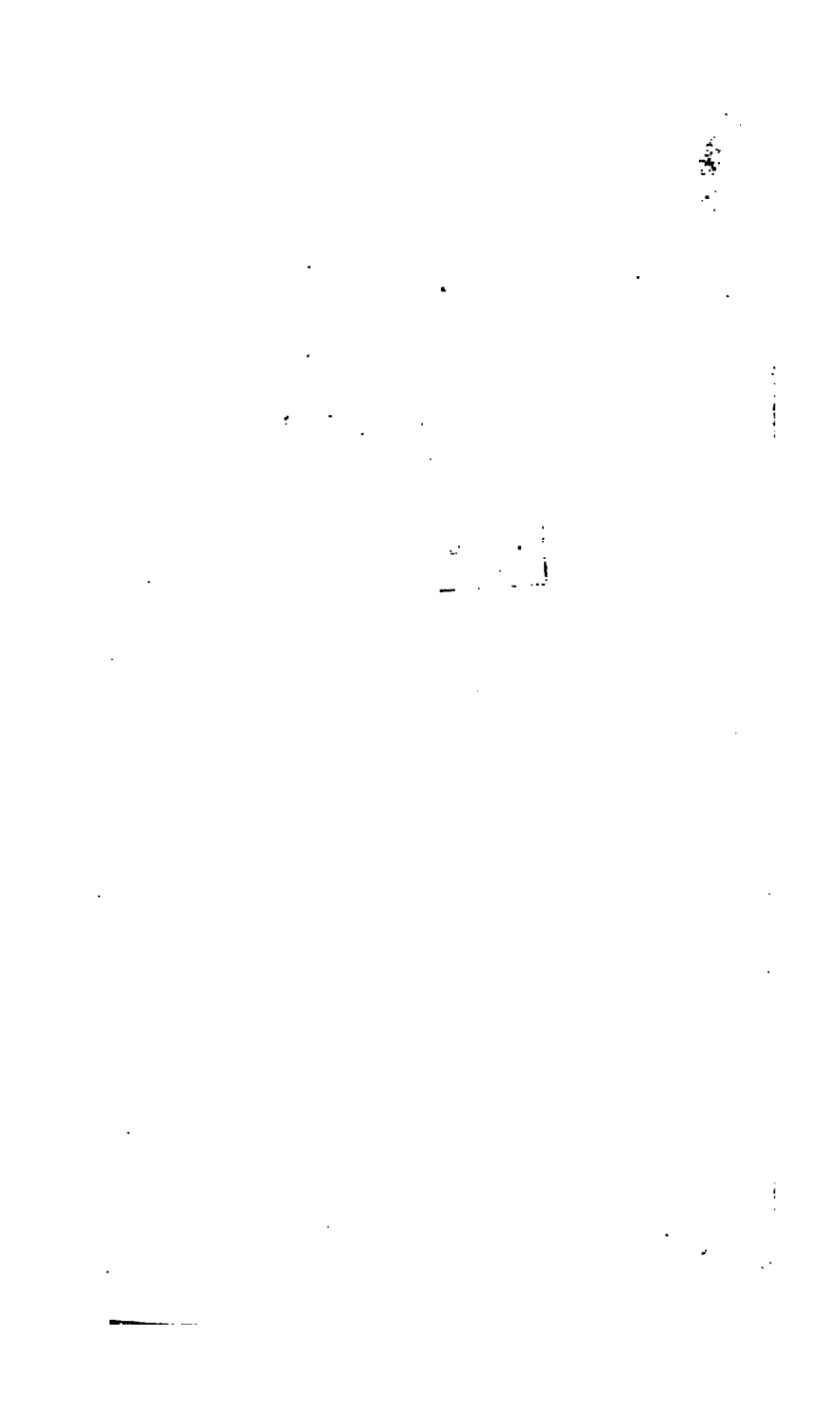
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FLIGHTS OF FANCY.

BY *E. Church*

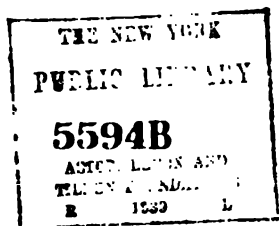
ELLA RODMAN.

New York:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN S. TAYLOR,

148 NASSAU STREET.

1853.



Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1952, by
JOHN S. TAYLOR,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

JOHN J. REED, Printer,
No. 16 Spruce-Street.

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To my Mother.

To her who so patiently assisted my first stumbling efforts to climb the hill of knowledge, I dedicate these wild-flowers gathered by the way. May those who read these sketches but prove as forbearing as that gentle guide at whose knee were lisped the first prayers of childhood!

My own dear Mother! I am arrested in the half-executed intention of inscribing a dedication that should at once express your merits and my short-comings, by memories of those days that can scarcely yet be termed "auld lang synes," when you patiently endured those fearful inflictions, "the productions of early *ignorance*." The ghosts of those sketches look at me reproachfully now, and fragments of ruins seem scattered around. Adventures that never did, could, or would happen

to any body—scenes that would find no parallel in history, ancient or modern—characters that were no characters at all—and details that hurried on to the *denouement*, like rivers to the ocean—these were indeed “sounds that would freeze your very blood.” Why, when my young ideas were trying to shoot, did they fail so widely of the mark?

But sometimes, when administering these opiates, yclept “stories,” “exhausted nature” could bear no more; and while you yielded to the influence of the “sweet restorer,” I wept the bitter tears of a disappointed child. My much-enduring Mother! how often you must have regretted that

“One small head contained e’en all I knew!”

May this not prove the additional drop in that already full cup of early afflictions; may it be but worthy of her to whom it is inscribed; and like the oyster’s tears, those moments of stormy grief will have become pearls that memory must ever cherish as the choicest jewels of her storehouse.

December 4th, 1852.

Flights of Fancy.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

EVERYTHING (said somebody, with a positive air) depends upon a first impression.

"I am not so sure of that," observed Mr. Darmidge, a gentlemanly-looking man of middle age; "indeed, I can afford most indisputable evidence to the contrary; that is," he continued, "if you are chattering away, as usual, upon the subjects of love and marriage."

The knot of young girls whom he had approached vehemently denied the imputation; but the rather disconcerted appearance of the animated speaker rendered the supposition more probable than otherwise. However, they were a pleasant and numerous family party of relatives to the fiftieth degree removed; and comforting themselves with the knowledge that "nobody minded Cousin Darmidge," they defended their own theory in the most ener-

getic manner, until, having at length exhausted their own powers of eloquence, they laughingly challenged him to bring forward his proofs to the contrary.

"Well, then," said he, with a mischievous glance at his wife, an elegant-looking woman, considerably his junior, "I will give you, for an illustration, the melancholy history of my own courtship."

"Do, do!" they all exclaimed; "the idea of Cousin Darmidge in love is perfectly delightful!"

"Really, Mr. Darmidge," observed his lady, with something of a frown on her pleasant face, "I beg that you will not manufacture any nonsense for the sake of a story."

"No, madam," he replied, with a profound bow, "there is, unfortunately, in what I am about to relate, nonsense enough already manufactured, which quite precludes the necessity of drawing on the imagination for a fresh supply."

They all stood somewhat in awe of the elegant Mrs. Darmidge, and were now on the *qui vive* for the promised story.

"To begin, then," said he, "at the beginning, which is, I suppose, as convenient a place as any, you must know that after I had been 'crossed in love' some dozen times or so, by various fickle charms, and had accumulated piles of love-letters—which, to tell the truth, were chiefly copies of my own—and hair enough, of different shades, to fill a moderate-sized pincushion, I began to get over my youthful folly; and, regarding these successive attacks as a sort of ordeal incidental to youth, and of the some nature as

the scarlet fever, whooping-cough, and other troubles of childhood, I resolved to give up a foolish kind of theory I had indulged in, about there being a something, called a heart, somewhere beneath my waistcoat, and make a goose of myself no longer. By-and-by I began to get what you saucy 'just-come-outs' term 'elderly,' and was set down as a regularly-confirmed old bachelor. Young ladies were my particular aversion ; and when any friend came to be congratulated upon his approaching marriage, I always wished him happiness with a kind of sardonic smile—the wish seeming equivalent to seeing a man walking through red-hot coals, and 'hoping that he wouldn't hurt himself.'

"At length, however, when I thought that there was no longer a possible chance of a second edition of my former folly ; when I had quite worked myself up to the idea that I was one of the most sensible men who had ever illuminated a darkened age, I began to deliberate upon the advantages and disadvantages of matrimony. You need not smile, young ladies, and look so very much delighted ; I had not the most distant idea of 'falling in love.' No ; I began to think that perhaps it might be pleasant to have some one to sit at the table and talk to me when I came home, get my slippers ready, and nurse me when I was sick. But I intended to look for some steady, elderly kind of a lady, who would not expect any of these attentions herself."

Here he was interrupted by the indignation of the younger members of the company ; but his wife was perfectly calm and placid, wearing a look which seemed to

say, "You may *talk* as you please, but I can *act*." When they allowed him to proceed, he continued, mournfully :

"Alas ! in spite of this fortification of excellent good sense, never was an unfortunate man so taken in and done for. I was completely deceived ; and this will show you the value of first impressions. It was a bleak, unpromising kind of a day in the early part of autumn ; and rather out of humor with myself and the rest of the world, and wearied with a long journey, I took my seat in the cars. Looking forward with no great pleasure to going home, I amused myself, as I glanced at those about me, by picturing their return, welcomed by voices that gladdened at their approach. I looked rather angrily toward them as two ladies, who appeared to be mother and daughter, seated themselves just opposite ; but my eyes, I suppose, from having nothing else to employ them, seemed constantly drawn in that direction—though when the younger lady happened to glance back, I assumed an angry scowl, and pretended to be occupied with my paper. But, nevertheless, I fell to musing on the possibility of having at length met with my *beau-ideal*. Although rather younger and better looking than I could have wished, she looked serious and steady ; and her whole appearance was so lady-like, and yet just what I wanted, that I felt half inclined to write a proposal on the margin of the newspaper and fling it over to her.

"At the hotel where I stopped, both mother and daughter stopped, too ; and as I had been troubled all through

the night by a vision of the unknown lady presiding over my establishment, I resolved to procure an introduction through a mutual friend. 'It must have been Mrs. Somers and her daughter,' said he, when I had described them; 'but I should think, from your description, that you had fallen in love with the *old* lady instead of the young one.' They were not visible at the tea-table, nor did I see them until the next morning—fatigue having caused them to keep their apartments.

"There was quite a large party at the hotel, given in honor of some illustrious stranger; and as an elegant-looking young lady rose from the piano, my friend led me up and presented me to Miss Somers. I was perfectly astonished; I could scarcely recognize my fellow-traveler of the preceding day. She appeared at least ten years younger; her eyes were sparkling with excitement, and, in short, instead of the sober wife-elect I had pictured, I beheld a beautiful young lady, who looked perfectly competent to torment any old bachelor's life out. I scarcely knew what to say: I had not conversed with a young lady for twenty years; but notwithstanding all my prejudices, there was something about Miss Somers that attracted me in spite of myself. I tried in vain to arm myself with all my strength of mind—a single look or tone put all to flight. In one week I was her devoted slave—in a month I had laid myself, my fortune, and my prejudices at the feet of Augusta Somers—and in the course of a year I beheld that lady transformed into Mrs. Darmidge. In less than a week after our marriage, I was

running up stairs for my wife's shawl; and she has played the tyrant ever since."

All agreed that he had been served exactly right; and Mrs. Darmidge said, with a smile :

"Since he has been foolish enough to publish this silly story, I may as well solve the mystery of my wonderful transformation. I had been traveling for a week with scarcely any rest; I had a violent headache and cold in my head, which is by no means a beautifier; and, added to this, I felt cross, which is very apt to show itself in my countenance. I had never seen Mr. Darmidge before, although I had often heard him spoken of as a very wealthy, eccentric old bachelor, but generous and noble-hearted, always ready to relieve the distressed—until I had worked up quite a little romance about him in my own mind, and felt very anxious to see him. His age was rather a recommendation. I had always wanted some one to look up to—some noble, dignified character, whom I could reverence as well as love; and I doubt if he ever had a warmer admirer than I was before I knew him. The cross-looking, elderly gentleman in the cars amused me very much; and had any one then said to me, 'Behold your future husband!' I should have laughed the idea to scorn. When the introduction took place, my surprise and disappointment quite equaled his: the old ogre, then, who had been frowning at me during the whole journey was Mr. Darmidge—*my ideal of perfection!* I was so provoked, that I resolved to make a conquest of him, just to punish him for being so different from what I had ex-

pected ; but when he began to talk, I found him so pleasant that I became interested in spite of myself ; and then he was so constantly doing something good and generous, which always came to my ears, that I began to thaw by degrees ; and when I really had made the projected conquest, I found that I had by no means come off unscathed."

"Just like the ballad of 'Johnny Sands,' said Mr. Dar-
midge ; "you wanted to push me into the water, and fell
in yourself—or, rather, we both fell in together."

"Pooh !" said Mr. Brettlehouse, an eminent lawyer,
always ready for a frolic, "as the boys say, 'I can beat
that.' Now, in my case—"

"Now, Mr. Brettlehouse," remonstrated his wife, a
pretty, lively little creature, who seemed to have scarcely
emerged from girlhood, "do not tell that nonsense, I be-
seech of you : only think how I shall blush."

"I shall tell it on purpose to expose you," replied her
husband. "A most villainous plot was concocted against
me ; and I was fairly carried off, and married by force. I
had the pleasure of overhearing the whole scheme before-
hand ; and, like a great fool, I rushed into the snare with
my eyes open. My story may serve as a warning to
others."

"Remember, though, that it is *only* a story," inter-
rupted his wife ; "a shameful fabrication, entirely of his
own manufacture."

Little Mrs. Brettlehouse laughingly ensconced herself
behind the substantial figure of a portly aunt, in pretended

modesty; and her husband proceeded with his narration :

"You remember," said he, "the favorite question in the fortune-tellers, 'Where will you meet your intended?' There appears now to be a decided majority in favor of cars and stage-coaches; for it was in one of the latter vehicles that I first beheld my evil genius."

Here Mrs. Brettlehouse, looking out from her screen, shook her head in a threatening manner; but the gentleman proceeded with unmoved dignity :

"I was traveling in the stage from Albany to Troy, having remained all night at the former place, where I had been very much interested in the case of a poor family, for whom I had endeavored to procure a pension; but as I succeeded, I did not regret the night's rest of which it had deprived me, although a glance in the mirror previous to starting would have been sufficient to eradicate any amount of personal vanity. It was pretty cold weather, and, muffling myself in a large cloak, and pulling my hat well over my ears, I threw myself back in the solitary vehicle, and entered upon my homeward journey.

"For some miles I enjoyed the charms of solitude; but before I had quite decided whether a fellow traveler would be agreeable or otherwise, the stage drew up at a white house, and from the quantity of band-boxes and other baggage, among which my one little valise seemed in danger of being smothered, I concluded that a lady would soon be forthcoming. Nor was I mistaken; a young lady, who appeared to have been wrapped in

every thing that was handy, came down the walk, accompanied by an elderly lady, who was evidently her maiden aunt.

“‘Now, take good care of yourself, my dear,’ said the aunt, ‘and keep the brick to your feet, and do not have the windows open. Driver,’ she continued, ‘are there any other passengers?’

“‘Only one gentleman, ma’am.’

“‘Then you must come with me, aunt,’ exclaimed the young lady, laughing, ‘for I positively can not think of traveling alone with a gentleman.’

“‘Oh, he’s an oldish kind of a one, miss,’ said the man, ‘he seems very quiet.’

“‘Well,’ thought I, ‘this is pleasant;’ for when a man verges on forty he is apt to be rather touchy about his age; so, evacuating the back seat for the benefit of the lady, I placed myself on the farthest one opposite, and, pulling my hat still farther over my eyes, resolved to perform the grave, elderly gentleman to perfection. My fellow traveler entered the vehicle with a spring in spite of her muffings; and having settled herself to her satisfaction, the stage proceeded at its usual pace, and I had leisure to examine the face of my *vis-a-vis*. A more mischievous-looking monkey I never beheld; her round, gipsy face beamed with merriment, and her eyes seemed ready to dance themselves out of her head. I could see, even at the first glance, that she was a complete flirt; and having looked toward the corner where I sat, probably in the forlorn hope of seeing something in a hat and coat

worth practicing upon, she gave a desponding sigh, and undutifully discarding the warm brick provided by her careful aunt, she drew forth a letter from her pocket, and was soon buried in its contents. The closely-written pages, erased and recrossed, proclaimed it to be a confidential epistle from some female friend; and wishing vehemently for the ghost of Mr. Burchell to utter such a 'fudge!' as none but he could utter, I watched her with rapidly kindling ire while she complacently perused each line. That finished, she began to bite her nails for further occupation, which raised in me a most ardent desire to box her ears. 'Not much like falling in love,' you will say; but, nevertheless, I began to feel certain twinges about the region of the heart, as I gazed on the bright face before me, while she, saucy minx! appeared to regard me as a part of the vehicle. But my time was coming.

"At a hotel where the stage stopped for a few moments, the young lady met a whole wagon full of girl acquaintances, whose surprise at seeing her appeared unbounded.

"'Why, Marion Connor!' they exclaimed, 'what are you doing here? What in the name of all that's wonderful, has brought you in this direction?'

"'I have business here,' she replied, with a laughing attempt at importance, 'I suppose you could not guess it?'

"'The only business I ever knew you to be engaged in was an attack upon the heart of some poor, unfortunate man,' rejoined one of the bevy.

"'That is just it exactly,' said Marion, with a merry laugh.

“‘So, then,’ thought I, ‘she makes a regular business of it, does she?’

“‘You must know, girls,’ she continued, with an appearance of great solemnity, ‘that I have concluded to settle down soberly at last. I am going to Troy on purpose to set my cap for the rich old lawyer, Sam Brettthouse, and I give you all an invitation to come and see me when I am married.’

“‘Do hear her,’ said one of them, ‘she speaks as though she was quite sure of him; how do you know that he will have you?’

“‘*Have me*, indeed!’ she replied, ‘of course he will be perfectly delighted at the idea. No fear of his not having me; the only thing is, he may be too bashful to imagine that so much happiness can be intended for him. But one thing I know; I am determined to have *him* at any rate.’

“‘Well,’ thought I, ‘if this impudence isn’t really too much? Here I am, actually disposed of before my very face, without being allowed to have a voice in the matter!’ I had a great mind to come forth from my obscurity and say, ‘the old lawyer thanks you for your flattering intention, madam, but begs to decline the honor you would confer upon him; but then, as I glanced at the young witch, I wondered if I did wish to decline it? So I wisely concluded to say nothing, and listened to their chattering as unmoved as though I had never heard of such a person as Sam Brettthouse.

“We drove on; and determined to get up some sort of conversation, I asked my companion if she found an

open window near her too cold. The inquiry was made in such a gruff voice, that, at first, she gave a visible start; but this was succeeded by such a sweet smile, that I felt almost conquered. During the remainder of the ride I was under the uneasy conviction that some kind of a spell was woven around me—mysterious toils from which I could not escape. Favored by the obscurity of my corner, I sat gazing at my companion, trying in vain to persuade myself that this girlish nonsense was bold and unbecoming. Then, as I remembered the visage I had encountered in the mirror, I began to fear that when she beheld the object of these laughing designs, she would change her mind. That she should see me after her arrival, and that very soon, I had fully determined, for I felt interested to know how she would proceed; but in what manner I should appear before her puzzled me considerably. At length I had hit upon a scheme. I thought it most probable that she would not recognize me upon a second meeting, as she had scarcely taken the trouble to look at me; besides, brushed up and improved, I should be quite a different individual, and I determined to feign entire ignorance, just to see how the adventure would turn out.

“Miss Connor was deposited at the house of a relative with whom I was acquainted; and keeping my journey in the stage-coach a profound secret, I waited for the finale. I heard that the young lady spoke of having traveled with an old bear, who growled at her once, and then relapsed into silence. I tried in vain to feel angry at this uncompli-

mentary speech; and on receiving an invitation for an evening party, where I knew that I should meet Miss Connor, I was so fidgetty about my dress, that I almost blushed for the dignity of my office. I endeavored to persuade myself that gray hairs were honorable, and called to mind all the instances I had heard of persons turning gray at a very early age; but people, I knew, could not be thus deluded in my case; and notwithstanding all my philosophy, I continued mercilessly pulling out hair after hair, until my eyes being suddenly opened to the alarming scantiness of my head-covering, I found that, unless I preferred being bald, it would be wiser to desist from my employment.

"I saw Miss Connor looking more beautiful and mischievous than ever; and when we were introduced, I armed myself with a look in which were mingled pleasure at the acquaintance, and the most stubborn conviction of never having seen her before. When my name was mentioned she started, and colored violently, and seemed anxious to escape somewhere; but I stood smiling in the most perfect unconsciousness, and glancing at me half-suspiciously with a somewhat puzzled air, she seemed quite at a loss what to do. A deep blush, probably called up by the remembrance of that conversation in the stage, burned constantly on her cheek, making her look so perfectly lovely that I would not, for worlds, have discovered myself. I could not help smiling, when, determined not to rest without being quite certain, she said, with an extremely penetrating look,

“‘I can not divest myself of the idea that I have seen you somewhere before, Mr. Brettthouse—the resemblance is very strong.’

“‘It must be a mistake,’ I replied, ‘for I should certainly remember *you*. But I am the most unfortunate man in that respect,’ I continued, ‘for I have such an accommodating face, that I am allowed no identity of my own; being constantly mistaken for some other person. Even in childhood, I offended all our aristocratic relations by looking so provokingly like every one else; and since my arrival at the years of discretion, I do assure you that I came very near being implicated in a breach of promise, on account of my unlucky phiz.’

“This was scrupulously true, for I really have been tormented in that way as never man was tormented before; and Miss Connor, seeming very much relieved, listened in great amusement to a long account of my calamities, which I told on purpose to drive away her suspicions. But I noticed that, notwithstanding my endeavors, she seemed to be on her guard; and there was not the least appearance of setting her cap. ‘Perhaps,’ thought I, ‘she may consider me an old dandy,’ as I glanced uneasily at my diamond pin and blue cravat, and wished that I had not discarded my usual black one.

“Miss Connor persisted in treating me with the greatest coolness; at church she never would look toward me—never appeared to see me if I walked beside her—and turned all my complimentary speeches into ridicule. She almost plagued my life out; and I believe that this was

the very reason why I thought so much of her. At length I could stand this no longer; and when I had mustered up courage to tell her so, she pretended to be very much surprised—said something about considering me as a friend—and acted like such a witch that I was half wild. Didn't I have my revenge afterward, when I let out my secret?

“‘Then, you really love me,’ said she, ‘no matter how I act?’

“‘I said something rather extravagant about being supremely happy, even if she chose to amuse herself by beating me with the poker; and finding me so accommodating, she at length relented.

“‘My dear,’ said I, the morning after we were married, ‘have you any recollection of an old bear with whom you once rode in the stage?’

“‘The spring with which the *ci-devant* Miss Connor started from the sofa was only equaled by the look that accompanied it. She seemed almost ready to eat me.

“‘Don't you think he looked very much like me?’ I continued, tantalizingly; ‘you told me so once.’

“‘You good-for-nothing, horrid fellow!’ she exclaimed, ‘how could I have been so taken in! I have done the very thing which I thought nothing could have tempted me to do. As I looked at that old witch in the stage, I wondered if he ever could be foolish enough to have any thoughts of getting married: I was persuaded that not even the wealth of Cræsus could tempt me to have him!’

“ ‘ *Taken in*, indeed !’ said I, laughing, ‘ I think I am the one who has been *taken in*.’

“ But there was now such a perfect explosion of grief, wounded modesty, and alarming hysterics, that, for the sake of peace, I was obliged to say that I did not believe she had any thoughts of such a thing—though, to this day, I believe that she had.”

“ Ladies and gentlemen,” said little Mrs. Brettlehouse, “ all that he has been telling you is a complete story, and he knows it ; but, even were it true, he needn’t brag of what he is so very thankful for. He is the most troublesome man that ever lived ; he follows me about so that I am tired of the very sight of him.”

Mr. Brettlehouse, to show his independence, began playing the agreeable to a young lady ; but a general laugh was raised against him, when, from the force of habit, he gradually advanced to the sofa, and seated himself in his usual place beside his wife.

“ Come, Mr. Groveswood,” exclaimed several merry voices, as a pale, intellectual-looking man entered, “ we are all telling our ‘ experience,’ and as we have already had ‘ two old men’s tales,’ we expect you to furnish something quite romantic.”

The new-comer was very handsome and elegant in appearance ; and in spite of ill-health, which had cast an air of languor and suffering over his expressive features, a sweet smile played around his mouth, and all the young ladies candidly acknowledged themselves in love with him—they pronounced him “ so very interesting.”

"As to romance," he replied, "I am afraid that I have done with that now; thirty-five is such a very matter-of-fact age. I believe, though, that this lady still confesses to that weakness. If I am not mistaken, she fell in love with me because she chose to imagine that my name was Ernest; but when she found that I was really plain, unromantic Daniel, she had serious thoughts of changing her mind. It is quite wonderful now how she contrives to avoid calling me by my right name. Generally it is 'Mr. Groveswood;' sometimes 'you;' and when very amiably disposed, 'my love;' but I do not think she has ever called me 'Daniel.'"

"You were always 'Ernest' to me," said his wife, to whom a three years' marriage had only unfolded fresh traits for love and respect in the husband of her choice; "but must I tell that very silly story? The folly, you know, was all on my side."

Mrs. Groveswood, although not generally called even pretty, had a slight, elegant figure, and a face that lighted up at times into an expression of intense beauty. It was an enthusiastic face; there was nothing tame or quiet about it, and while an over-sensitiveness of feeling called the tears to her eyes on the slightest occasion, a keen perception of the ludicrous often dimpled her mouth with irrepressible merriment. All were determined to have the story, and after vain entreaties to be excused, Mrs. Groveswood resigned herself to her fate.

"I think," said she, that from the time when I began to think at all, I have lived in a kind of dream with my

eyes open. I have been all my life deceived and undeceived, but to have the same thing repeated over again. I never enjoyed realities, because I lived in an ideal world; and not even ridicule, that damper of all sentiment, has quite cured me of my unfortunate predilection. I always identified myself with the heroine of any favorite book, and as such, was supremely happy. I knew very well that I was not beautiful, and but little of my time was spent before the glass, for that destroyed the illusion; but lulled into forgetfulness of realities by some exciting novel, what a blissful life I lived! What noble, elevated love was mine! Never lady of the olden time had such devotees at her shrine as those whom my fancy conjured up; never were noble deeds so abundant, and every-day characters so uncommon as in the Utopia where I reigned supreme.

“But not satisfied with this, I generally embellished persons whom I met with those qualities which alone, as I imagined, constituted perfection. At church I often distributed the characters in the ‘Children of the Abbey,’ and other favorite works, among the different members of the congregation; and for several successive Sundays I worshiped an imaginary ‘Amanda’—until one day, chancing to walk behind her, as she promenaded with an acquaintance, leading a cross child by the hand, I overheard her saying, ‘Sugar has risen dreadfully, and the price of coal is really enormous.’ She was immediately discarded from the cherished volume, and a worthier ‘Amanda’ supplied her place.

“On another occasion, a gentleman whom I had hitherto considered rather common-place, happening to say in answer to a question, ‘I am too rheumatic to do so and so,’ my ever-ready fancy converted it into ‘I am too romantic;’ and conquering my natural bashfulness, I exclaimed, without a moment’s thought, ‘Oh! I am so glad to find some one who confesses to a little romance! I began to despair of ever meeting with such a person.’ My new subject was certainly as matter-of-fact an individual as I could have selected; for after gazing at me as though he somewhat doubted my sanity, in the most business-like manner he requested a definition of romantic. ‘Do you mean,’ said he, ‘some one who spends his nights in stargazing, and his days in writing poetry? If so, you have very much mistaken me.’ I warmly denied such an imputation, and endeavored to define my meaning as something noble and lofty; but during my rather unsatisfactory explanation, I became painfully conscious that the term ‘romantic’ was something to be imagined rather than described. I sat with burning cheeks after this ridiculous *exposé*, with the pleasant conviction that the others were enjoying a laugh at my expense.

“At sixteen I was most hopelessly in love with an ideal, manufactured after the following receipt: equal quantities of William Wallace, Sir Walter Scott, General Washington, and Lafayette, with half an ounce of Byron, and an immense quantity of imaginary qualities supplied by myself. And, yet, even this constellation of virtues alone would not have been sufficient; the unknown idol must

also possess a claim on my sympathy. . I felt that I could not love one who was in full possession of all his faculties, like the common herd ; he must be unfortunate in some way—delicate in health—just sufficiently ill, perhaps, to require some one to bathe his forehead with cologne, and sit and hold his hand, or read to him. I never reflected how illy calculated I was for the office of nurse.

“At length I seemed destined to meet with my *beau ideal*. A matter-of-fact relative, who had often ridiculed my fancies, told me that she had discovered a hero every way worthy to fill the vacant place in my visions of romance. ‘He is an old bachelor,’ said she, ‘over thirty, delicate in health, fastidious in his taste, and, in short, every thing that you admire—except that he is wealthy.’ This was to me a very great objection—he must be unfortunate in every way ; but I made the minutest inquiries respecting him, until Mr. Groveswood, as he ought to have been, stood exactly pictured in my mind. My uncle, who, being a complete Tom Thumb himself, imagined every one a giant who towered even an inch above him, represented the newly-discovered hero tall enough even to suit my extended views ; and this, with a pair of dark, deep, earnest eyes, lofty brow, and raven locks, with perhaps here and there a silver thread, formed a picture that exactly realized my *beau-ideal*. I was not vain, and I did not once think of a return. I poured forth the whole treasure of my love upon the idol whom I had created, and thought of nothing further. I half dreaded to behold the original, fearful of seeing my dreams dispelled ; but then,

too, I wished to see one whom I had endowed with all the virtues which should have been distributed among the rest of the human race. But time passed on, and I saw him not : the Fates seemed to have interfered to prevent a meeting. Whenever I went there, Mr. Groveswood had just gone, and I could not even obtain a glimpse of him.

“It was a warm day in July, and at my uncle’s country-seat, where I was on a visit, we scarcely knew what to do with ourselves. The ‘we,’ in this case, means my aunt, and a fashionable widow, who appeared to be established there as a guest for an indefinite time. As for me, with a book within reach, I never felt *ennui*. I disliked any visitors, but this Mrs. Medway was my particular dread ; for she did not cease to laugh at me from morning till night. She christened me ‘Miss Innocence,’ because, to tell the truth, I was often shocked at the style of conversation which took place between fashionable ladies, half of which I could not understand, but what I did, often sent me ashamed from the room. Although verging on forty, she by no means resigned all claims to admiration ; and by dressing in a youthful manner, she appeared much younger than she really was.

“On the day in question she had retired to her apartment for a *siesta* ; I was seated in a shady corner of the front piazza, buried in a book ; and my aunt occupied the settee, on which she had reclined at full length. There was a noise of carriage-wheels, and a vehicle stopping at the gate. I looked up with a sigh, but seeing only a cross-looking gentleman, and two strange ladies, who refused to

come in, I resumed my book. My aunt, after talking to them for some time, turned to me, and asked me to go and call Mrs. Medway. I entered the darkened apartment, whose occupant was enjoying a comfortable nap (her chief enjoyment, by the way, in the absence of visitors), and roused her from her slumbers, with the information that somebody wished to see her. But feeling cross at being disturbed, and not hearing any voices, she concluded that they had gone, and pulled me down beside her, to the imminent hazard of my muslin dress. But before long a messenger appeared, with the intelligence that Mr. Groveswood was in the parlor.

"*Mr. Groveswood!* How we both started! I, with acute disappointment, for the face I had seen was not at all the one I had pictured; and Mrs. Medway, with the laudable intention of dressing herself to the best advantage. I stood in silent consternation, with my dress tumbled, and my hair disordered, while the widow proceeded with her toilet. At length, having sufficiently adorned herself, she had time to be generous; and shaking out my rumpled dress, she threw an ornament over my neck, and drawing my arm through hers, we proceeded to the parlor.

"I scarcely ventured to look up; but when I did, I found myself close beside the formidable Mr. Groveswood. All my visions were dispelled at the first glance; my hero was not an inch above the middle height—not near as grave and melancholy-looking as I could wish, for he had a very hearty laugh—and besides, he was entirely too youthful in appearance to inspire the least bit of rever-

ence. Were he not listening so attentively, I should say that, disappointed as I felt, I could not help acknowledging to myself that he was very handsome; but men are so notoriously conceited that I withhold the compliment till some other time. I remember that he spoke to me, but I am not sure that I made a reply at all to the purpose; I felt so foolish and bashful—embarrassed by the consciousness of my disordered dress. As I glanced at a young lady near me, a cousin of Mr. Groveswood, who was properly be-muslined, be-laced, and be-ribboned, and who seemed to feel very comfortable in consequence, as she sat, perfectly at her ease, playing with a handsome fan, I could not help wishing that I had paid a little more attention to my dress, and a little less to my novel. Nature could not have intended me for a heroine; I never could throw on my clothes at random, like the divinities you read of, and yet look perfectly proper and suitable—and my hair, instead of falling around me like a graceful vail, if loosed by exercise, was sure to assume a Madge Wild-fire style, unless put up with particular care. ‘Well,’ thought I, ‘Mr. Groveswood, of course, thinks me an awkward, ill-dressed, plain-looking girl;’ and as I appeared rather mature for sixteen, I was half persuaded that he considered me an old maid.

“Before I had quite recovered from my surprise and embarrassment, he was gone; but at parting he made a most gentlemanly bow, intended particularly for me, and quite distinct from the rest—one of those attentions which is carefully treasured up by a girl ‘not yet come out.’

Mrs. Medway had scarcely been honored with a word; and perhaps it was this circumstance which led her rather to censure, than praise, the unexpected visitor. I was disappointed, and yet interested, too; I scarcely knew which predominated. My aunt told us that the carriage had been very nearly upset; and that, when advised to get out, Mr. Groveswood refused to stir until the ladies, a sister and cousin, had been safely deposited on terra firma. It only needed this, and a little bit of Mrs. Medway's ridicule, to decide the matter.

"'Noble, lofty conduct!' I exclaimed, in a burst of enthusiasm; 'if I had only been there to stop the horses, and drag him from the carriage!'

"'And been laughed at for your pains,' observed the widow.

"But I heeded her not; my imagination was riding off full chase; I created Mr. Groveswood anew, and before my own creation I worshiped and adored. He had accepted an early invitation to dinner, and during the intervening time I actually tried on all my dresses to select the most becoming—discarded a habit of running out in the sun—and let an interesting novel lie unnoticed, with a book-mark in it.

"The eventful day arrived, and my eyes were opened to the fact that Mrs. Medway was arraying herself with particular care for Mr. Groveswood. I was impressed with the hopeless conviction that unformed sixteen would have but little chance against well-matured forty; but not being quite a fool, I endeavored to persuade the widow to

don a cap with pink bows, which was, as I assured her, very becoming. 'This,' thought I, 'will give her a matronly appearance, and I shall have the advantage of youth, at least.' But Mrs. Medway smiled pleasantly at my disinterested entreaties, and left the cap in its box. My aunt seemed provokingly determined to assist her with all the aid of her taste and skill; and when, feeling rather jealous, I reproached her for neglecting me to adorn the widow (for there had been a kind of laughing wager between us to see which would win the day), she replied:

"'But I really believe Mrs. Medway to be in earnest.'

"'How do you know,' said I, with averted face, 'but that I, too, am in earnest?'

"'Pooh, child!' was the reply, as she clasped my bracelet, 'you would scarcely be such a fool—you are too young for that yet. Mrs. Medway is just the very person for him—she can nurse and take care of him.'

"I could not avoid asking myself if Mr. Groveswood were the person to marry for a *nurse*? And as to Mrs. Medway's care, I called to mind various observations which she had made respecting her married life. 'I had so much philosophy,' said she, 'that, after my husband failed, I went to a dinner-party the very day that there was an auction in the house. Mr. Medway, not being very well, remained at home.' 'Is it possible!' I exclaimed, indignantly; 'and do you call this *philosophy*? A wife's place, at such a time, was at her husband's bedside, with her hand clasped in his, listening to his slightest breath.' 'There was nothing of the kind to listen to,' said

she, laughing; 'Mr. Medway did not go to bed—he paced up and down the room.' I left the room in disgust at such utter heartlessness, and Mrs. Medway considered me more crazy than ever.

"Mr. Groveswood came; but as I scarcely found courage to answer his questions, he turned to the brilliant widow, while I sat in a quiet corner, watching every word he uttered, and wishing in vain for Mrs. Medwood's fluency. 'This,' thought I, 'is my reward; I have defended him constantly against that woman's ridicule—I have endowed him with the virtues of a god—while she considers him, to use her own term, but as a good speculation; I am wasting my youth in a hopeless dream.'

"Here, to conceal the tears which started to my eyes at this moving picture of my own griefs, I was obliged to bend down low over a book, and thus lost several sentences, which, from the widow's pleased appearance, were, I felt convinced, something very complimentary. She was evidently in the full tide of success; and jealous and angry, I sat twisting my bracelet, and wishing her a journey to the North Pole.

"The dinner passed off, the guest departed, and there was nothing left but retrospection. Strange to say, Mrs. Medway married a wealthy Southerner; and years passed on, but I saw no more of Mr. Groveswood. He had been traveling for some time, and I looked back on my youthful dream with a smile.

"At nineteen I felt that I was no longer a child; and as I had not been troubled with a second love-attack, I

deceived myself into the belief that I had become quite a sensible kind of person. I had changed my character, too; instead of the novel-reading child, I was transformed into a laughter-loving girl, whose passion for the ludicrous was perfectly incurable. Every trace of bashfulness, too, had quite disappeared; and I could now laugh at my former tremors in the presence of visitors.

“One day, upon entering the drawing-room of an acquaintance, I saw a slight, elegant-looking man, whose *tout ensemble* seemed familiar; and when he turned fully around, I beheld Mr. Groveswood. At first I was rather embarrassed at the idea of meeting him again, and felt the color mounting to my cheeks, while I wondered what would be said and done on both sides; but I might have saved myself the trouble of any such emotion, for the gentleman, with the most perfect unconsciousness of having seen me before, honored me with a courtly bow on being presented, and resumed his seat. I was half disposed to laugh at the total failure of my projected scene; while at the same time, I did not see what right I had to expect more. Mr. Groveswood was handsomer and more elegant-looking than ever; but I noticed that he was paler, and had an air of languor which suffering alone could give. I saw, too, that his hair was now streaked with the silver threads, whose absence I had regretted three years before—in short, he was now the exact *beau-ideal* of my youth.

“‘You do not seem to remember me,’ said I, at length, to see what he would say, ‘I believe I met you, three years ago, at—’

"He seemed surprised at first. 'The name,' said he, 'struck me as being familiar, but you are very much changed since then.' He looked as though he considered this change for the better; at least so my vanity interpreted it.

"'You, too, are changed,' said I.

"'Yes,' replied he, sadly; 'sickness and suffering leave their marks.'

"We seemed to have changed characters entirely; his pensive, half-melancholy tone almost brought the tears to my eyes; but I endeavored to make him forget such feelings, and soon elicited a smile—for the laugh which had offended my girlish taste for melancholy and concealed griefs, was now gone.

"I really do not remember how it came about—even now I can scarcely realize it; but one day I found myself saying, 'love, honor, and obey,' and now they call me Mrs. Groveswood.'"

"I will tell you how it came about," said Mr. Groveswood. "A lonely, broken-down old bachelor, with no home which he could call his, met with a warm-hearted, enthusiastic girl, who seemed to pity his misfortunes, and tolerate his faults, and asked her to take him 'for better or for worse.' She must tell you which it has proved—I do not like to bear witness against myself."

A single look was turned upon him, but that was all sufficient. They all revered the half-romantic attachment of Mr. and Mrs. Groveswood.

"Well," observed Mr. Darmidge, "the case has now

been tried, and 'first impressions' are as worthless as a lover's vows.

"Moral—always remember, young ladies, that when you expect any gentleman in particular, and take extraordinary pains for your first *debut*, that very individual will be sure to catch you in curl-papers and a morning wrapper. The court will now adjourn."



MR. ELMLY'S PEARL.

IT was about eight o'clock in the evening, a cold, winter evening, and a handsome house in the upper part of the city was a perfect blaze of light. It basked amid the folds of the heavy curtains, and then, as the rays were caught by the drops of the chandeliers, it glowed and sparkled in a thousand different hues. Even the weary beggar paused to fold her rags more closely about her, as she gazed with wondering admiration; and words wrung from a hopeless heart trembled on her pale lips.

“Oh, blessed are the rich! for theirs is the good of the earth. They go to their splendid homes and rest sweetly on couches of down; no famishing children crying for bread which is not theirs to give—no sick and loved ones fading before their eyes, with the cold floor for their dying bed—no bitter words and shameful acts to drive them on to deeds from which they would recoil—naught but light, and love, and plenty. God help the poor!”

She passed on from the abode of wealth, and bitter thoughts were in her heart, but none knew it, and none cared—none, at least, of those who that night thronged

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the splendid mansion, and glided languidly to the sound of music.

There were only three persons in those lofty rooms then ; a gentleman and two ladies, evidently awaiting the arrival of expected visitors. The elder lady was attired in a black velvet dress, and point lace cap ; but to judge from her frequent smoothing of the folds in the skirt, and re-arrangement of the lace lappets, she was evidently ill at ease. Her face had no kind of a look, that is, nothing by which one could determine upon her position—for stylish people often look quite as common, and common people quite as stylish. Just now it wore an expression of anxiety, and there was something of a frown upon her brow.

“How very foolish it was of you, Gilbert,” she exclaimed, “to insist upon dressing up an old woman like me in this ridiculous manner ! I feel ten times better in my old sage-colored silk than I ever shall in this heavy stuff—four dollars a yard, too ! how preposterous for a dress ! I declare, I can hardly believe that you are Gilbert Elmly, and I your sister Sarah—it seems like a dream ! What business have *we* here, among these pictures, and curtains, and gim-cracks ? The old room in Cherry Street, with its checked baize, and black hair-cloth chairs, looked a thousand times more natural !”

How much longer she might have gone on it is impossible to say, for she had touched upon a favorite topic ; but the mild-looking gentleman in a blue coat, who had been complacently perambulating up and down, stopped before her, as he replied laughingly,

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"Yes, yes, Sarah; it is all very hard to believe, I know, and sometimes I find myself wondering, too; but still it is all honestly mine—that you may rest assured of—and I have formally installed you as mistress of the establishment. Every thing changes, of course—it is the way of the world; and this I consider a change very much for the better—don't you, Ada?"

This was addressed to a pale, fair-looking girl who stood bending over a music-book; and as she raised her head at the question, her face became suffused with a deep blush. She, foolish girl! was thinking of a plainly furnished room in an unfashionable part of the city; and there rose up before her a vision of pleasant faces, as with the shaded light placed on the little round table, a gentleman, who bore a marvelous resemblance to the one before her, sat resting, with slippered feet, in a large arm-chair, after the fatigues of the day—while she read to him from the newspaper, in a seat which he had placed as close to his own as possible—and Miss Sarah Elmly, in her favorite sage-colored silk, occupied herself most industriously with some interminable piece of sewing. A very, very short time since the circle was just as she loved to fancy it—and now, there they were in a gorgeous palace, with every thing around them but happiness. Surely they should have been contented!

Ada Willbank was a sort of ward of Mr. Elmly's; that is, she had been left to his guardianship by a dissipated father, whose property was found, at his death, to have dwindled away to a very small amount. But Mr. Elmly never told Ada how very small this was; she knew that

it could not be a very great sum, but little did she know that she was indebted to her guardian for almost every dollar she spent. Her face was not exactly pretty, and when she stood bending over a book as now, she was only a pale, quiet-looking girl, with a look somewhat of suffering upon her face; for Ada was lame—and to such, a pensive, wistful expression seems ever to belong. But when she raised those beautiful eyes of the deepest blue, with long, dark lashes, there was at once a world of character in the quiet face. They spoke of mind and intellect that seemed almost too much for that slight frame—of goodness, and truth, and purity—and feelings in which no thought of guile had ever mingled. She generally sought some retired corner, more than ever since their change to this splendid, butterfly state of existence; for although she walked with very little difficulty, she shrank painfully from attracting any stranger's eye. The world to her contained only those two—all the rest was a blank. She always addressed the sister as "Aunt Sarah;" she had been taught to call her so; but somehow she could not call her guardian "uncle"—he was always "Mr. Elmly."

Ada was very small and delicate in appearance, and although she was now eighteen, her slight figure, and the extreme simplicity of her white muslin dress, made her look much younger. She had decidedly refused to wear any dress less unpretending, but Mr. Elmly took care that it should be as elegant as possible of the kind; and when she entered the room that evening he clasped a chain about her neck, to which was attached a heart of

turquoise and diamonds—breaking forth at the same time into an extravagant eulogy on her appearance. A bright color rose in Ada's cheeks, but whether called up by the heart or the words it is difficult to determine.

But she has been a long while answering his question, and, indeed, she was almost as long in reality, for she didn't know what to say. At length she murmured,

"It is very handsome."

"*Very handsome!*" repeated Mr. Elmlý, emphatically, "*it ought* to be 'very handsome.' But that, Miss Ada, is not an answer, it is an equivocation—I hate equivocations."

Ada bent again over her book; but Miss Elmlý saved her the trouble of making any rejoinder, for, giving the velvet skirt a series of twitches, she broke forth with,

"I have a great mind to shut myself up in my own room for the rest of the evening! What am I to do with all the strange people who are coming, I should like to know! I have never seen half of them! 'Entertain' them, indeed! when I can scarcely make out what they say, between their French words and new-fangled expressions. And then, too, they are always asking me about things I never even heard of. I wonder at you, Gilbert, for thrusting yourself and all of us into such a scrape! You needn't laugh—they will be laughing at you before long."

"I am not in the least afraid," he replied, "for the world is a great coward, and, like some school-boys I have seen, only bullies where it can do so with impunity. It

would be *afraid* to laugh at *me*, Gilbert Elmly, just retired on five hundred thousand dollars. I may be as ill-tempered, awkward, and ignorant as I choose, and they will court and flatter me. And you, my dear sister, need not trouble yourself in the least; if you are rather taciturn, and ill-at-ease, it will be attributed to hauteur consequent upon being sister to a man like me—if you talk much, and use expressions a little different from theirs, you will be affable and eccentric. As to Ada, she need do nothing but look as pretty as she does now, to come in for more than her share of admiration. You look surprised, Ada, to find me so well acquainted with the ways of the world. No matter how I obtained my knowledge—sufficient that I have it.”

But I have not yet told you how old Mr. Elmly was; do not start, he was forty-five—and Miss Elmly was five years older.

“But I can not see yet why you have done this,” resumed his sister; “I know that we can *never* be happy here—we are not fitted for it; and why don’t you live now as you have always been in the habit of living?”

Mr. Elmly smiled at her vehemence, and glancing at his watch, observed, “half-past eight; the notes, I believe, specified nine, so that we have still half an hour, in which I will endeavor to give some explanation of my proceedings.”

He seated himself between the two as he continued, “When we were children, Sarah, you know that we lived in the country; and the happy period of my childhood is

still as fresh in my mind as the events of yesterday. How we raced and tumbled about in all the wild joy of freedom and health! now swinging in the tree-tops, and then paddling in the brook, or scrambling among thorns and briars in those old woods, after violets, and strawberries, and nuts—knowing no restraint, or recognizing none save a mother's love. Oh, those were happy times! and I had a pearl in those days, which never left me unless some froward act had brought a tear to the gentle eyes which ever watched me with looks of love, and then it turned dark and colorless. I am not going to be sentimental, Ada—a man of my age is too old for that; I will only tell you how I lost my pearl. The first time that I was conscious of my loss, was a dreary, never-to-be-forgotten day, that always looks gray and misty when viewed from memory's store-house. It was May, and the birds sang, and the sun shone; but it was a cloudy day, for I left my pleasant home, and came to the dark, cheerless, discouraging-looking city—a stranger in a strange place, with no familiar voice to whisper my name, or bid me welcome. The store to which I was destined was situated in a street more gloomy, if possible, than any I had passed through; and with a trembling hand, and confused head, I proceeded with my task. At night, upon my bed in the deserted store, I looked for my pearl, but it was gone.

“I toiled thus for years; I became independent—wealthy—but my pearl never returned. I fancied myself happy during our quiet life in Cherry Street, but there was still

an unsatisfied longing—a yearning for something more—something different—that has never been satisfied. At length something whispered to me that it was very foolish to search for pearls among dust and rubbish—in other words, to expect happiness from such a hum-drum existence; so I determined to come out into the light, and look for my pearl. I am going to begin the search this very night.”

Ada had suddenly drawn away the hand which he took, and sat with her face averted, curling the leaves of a book. Miss Elmly listened patiently to the end; in the mean time making certain reflections of her own as to her brother’s sanity, with all this nonsense about pearls.

“Gilbert,” said she, suddenly, “I can tell you what will be the end of this: some designing girl, with more art than wealth, will lead you to make a fool of yourself before long.”

“If you mean by that, Sarah, that I shall one of these days get married,” replied her brother, laughing, “I have entertained the very same thoughts myself.”

Ada’s head drooped still more.

“Of course,” he continued, merrily, “the mistress of such an establishment should be young and beautiful, and proud—with that kind of manner that puts down nobodies, and takes up somebodies. She should be accomplished, too—and sing and play like an angel, at the very least—there is a marvelous magic in a sweet voice.”

Poor Ada! her pillow that night was wet with tears. She had so envied the gift of song—so hung upon the

tones that issued from the lips of those famed ones! for although her voice, in speaking, was sweet and gentle, she could not raise a note. What would she have given to be able to warble even "Auld Robin Gray!"

"There!" exclaimed Miss Elmly, as her fan suddenly snapped in two from awkward usage, "there go ten dollars to begin with! And they don't give half the air of the old palm-leaf one I always carried to church. There goes the bell, too! Do tell me, Gilbert! what must I do? What must I say?"

The prudent spinster exhibited such unwonted emotion, that Mr. Elmly could scarcely command his countenance—but it became necessary to do so, for some one was coming in; and whispering a few directions to his sister, he advanced to meet them.

The room filled rapidly; and the world of fashion determined that night to admit within its precincts the wealthy bachelor, Gilbert Elmly. His sister passed very well—the black velvet dress, and point lace cap, materially assisting so desirable an end—and Ada was left undisturbed in her corner, to admire the brilliant crowd, and wonder which face would be likely to attract *his* fancy, until, a report being spread that she was the niece and heiress of the Elmlys, she was soon drawn forth from her obscurity. How she longed to get away from the brilliant lights and gorgeous crowd, and weep unrestrainedly in her own apartment!

Gilbert Elmly, believing himself invincible, from his knowledge of the world, and his contempt for mere out-

side show, mingled unreservedly with the trifles about him, at first laughing within himself at their emptiness and vanity; but suddenly something glowed and sparkled, and he, poor, deluded man! began to think that he had found his pearl.

White robes flitted gracefully past him to the harp at the farther end of the room—snowy fingers were busy with the chords—and a strain of delicious melody gushed forth upon the air. Now low, tremulous, and sweet—anon breaking forth into louder strains, but still strains of surpassing sweetness; scarcely a sound was heard among the listeners—every other voice was hushed in rapt attention. A pair of deep-blue orbs were fixed upon the singer with a wistful, almost imploring expression; and the slight figure of the lame girl was bent forward as though to catch every tone.

Gilbert Elmly had placed himself in a position that commanded a full view of the musician's face; and a sudden glance from those dark, fathomless eyes, thrilled through his very heart. They were as suddenly withdrawn, and a deep blush tinged the marble cheek, while the long lashes drooped like a shadow over it.

She rose from the instrument, and others took her place, but that melting strain still vibrated through his heart. The gaze of those large, dark eyes haunted him as with a spell, and he glanced at the pearls on her bosom, and thought of *his* pearl—his lost, unrecovered jewel. Turn back, Gilbert Elmly—the pearl sits pining in the darkness, for the light of love is withdrawn,

and a false glitter is leading thee on further and further from it.

"How well you played to-night, Florence," was the mother's remark, as the two drove rapidly home.

Florence Hamilton was buried in a train of pleasant thoughts that came dancing through her brain; but she answered quickly, "I am quite aware of that, mamma; and if I mistake not, that song is worth to me at least five hundred thousand dollars."

"You mean the bachelor?" was the rejoinder; "yes, he is evidently smitten, and a very fine man, too, my dear."

"I do not know what you mean by 'a fine man,'" replied the daughter, pettishly; "if it implies one very rich and rather weak, that he certainly is; but as to appearance, he might almost pass for my grandfather—there is, besides, a total absence of any style about him whatever."

"And yet, my dear, you would be willing to become *Mrs.* Gilbert Elmly?"

"Certainly I should; I do not see what that has to do with it."

"Of course not," replied the mother; and the two relapsed into silence.

That night Gilbert Elmly, for the first time, gloried in his wealth; the beautiful face of Florence Hamilton came mingling with his dreams, and then a low sound of music-strains rose upon his ear.

Days passed, and the fascination continued; the world to him contained but Florence—he forgot all beside, and spent hour after hour listening to those thrilling tones, rapt

in a state of ecstasy. Her harp was every day wreathed with fresh flowers; flowers breathed out their fragrance within the walls of her boudoir—flowers bloomed in her hair—he seemed resolved to bury her in a wilderness of sweets. Day after day the two went forth together—the sober, middle-aged man, and the beautiful, blooming girl; and people talked and wondered, while the two still kept their own counsel.

One morning Florence Hamilton sat alone beside her harp, but the beautiful hand no longer swept the strings; a smile was on the full, red lips, as she turned a ring on her finger in different directions, that the light might fall more vividly upon it.

“I always had a passion for diamonds,” she murmured to herself, “and after all, he does very well.”

And what has become of Ada? The poor, unloved, neglected one? She had spoken very little since the night of the party, and went about with a face even more quiet and pale than usual. She seemed almost to have turned into marble—so very rigid was the expression of her features; and her eyes were now always veiled by the long lashes.

“How very pale you look, Ada,” observed Mr. Elmly, kindly; “I am afraid the new house does not agree with you.”

He was right—it did not; but Ada merely smiled sadly as she sipped her coffee.

“It would be very strange if it did agree with her,” said Miss Elmly, sharply; “the more I see of it, the more I

am disposed to find fault with it. A parlor and dining-room on one floor are quite enough for any reasonable people; but here you must have two parlors, a library, a dining-room, and butler's pantry, with doors that slide into all sorts of queer places, instead of opening as they should do. I am always thinking of the rooms in Cherry Street, and keep pushing at the doors to make them open, until that good-for-nothing mulatto fellow comes along with a smile on his face, and has the impudence to say, 'allow me, ma'am.' What business has he to be polite, and say, 'allow me, ma'am,' just as if he thought himself a gentleman? Of course he will be allowed to do what he is paid for doing, but I hate these new servants. And do, for pity's sake, Gilbert, either keep that Mrs. Marlinton away from me, or else make me a small dictionary of their queer words to carry in my pocket. She is always asking me some ridiculous question about the house, and says that when *they* build they intend to have a port-go-chair—now what in the world is that?"

"*Porte-cochere*, Sarah," said her brother, laughing; and on receiving the desired explanation, Miss Elmlly looked almost as wise as she had done before.

But Mr. Elmlly was now often away from home; and Ada saw much less of him than formerly. She would quietly take her book to some retired apartment, or else spend her time in the library, still bending, pale and exhausted, over heavy volumes, the contents of which often swam before her eyes as the tears came welling forth. That beautiful, dark-eyed girl seemed ever before her; she

had caught his glance, as it was bent that night on the downcast face, and she knew not why, but her heart grew cold within her. She had noticed, too, the look, half of scorn, half of pity, with which Miss Hamilton had surveyed her when they were presented to each other; and she trembled to think of the life that would be hers when a new mistress came into the house of Gilbert Elmly. Her resolution was taken, however—she determined to qualify herself for a teacher; and steadily pursuing her daily, and often midnight task, she endeavored to forget the past.

Sometimes she would glide stealthily into the drawing-room, when she knew that *he* was out, often at the twilight hour—and selecting from the music-book some simple air, endeavor to bring forth the notes correctly; she *so* wanted to play, at least, “Auld Robin Gray” for him before she went!

She was surprised there, one evening, by the entrance of Mr. Elmly.

“Why, Ada!” he exclaimed, “you look almost like a ghost, you are so pale, and how you tremble! Sit down, I wish to speak to you.”

Cheek and lips had become perfectly colorless; and Mr. Elmly, after gazing upon her in surprise for a moment, continued, “You have been moping too much by yourself, Ada; but you will soon have a companion, for the beautiful Florence Hamilton has consented to become my wife.”

“May you be happy!” quivered on her pale lips; but the words were scarcely audible, and the next moment Ada lay senseless at his feet.

Very much bewildered, Gilbert Elmly raised her gently from the floor, and now, for the first time, an idea which he never could have imagined flashed through his mind; and with a heavy sigh he bore his insensible burden to a sofa, and then called his sister.

Ada awoke but too soon to consciousness; but the pale lips uttered not a word, and they did not seek to rouse her from her stupor.

It was some days after the scene in the drawing-room, and Mr. Elmly stood buttoning his overcoat at the dining-room window, wearing very much the expression of a man who was undergoing a scolding. Miss Elmly sat balancing her tea-spoon on her cup, and looking as though she had just heard something which she had always predicted would happen, and hesitating between her satisfaction on finding herself in the right, and her natural dislike to bad news.

"Well," said she, after a pause, "I really don't know but I am rather glad of it, upon the whole; because I always told you so, and you wouldn't listen to my advice. No fortune could support this extravagant style of living; but it is a great deal easier, I can tell you, to go up in the world than to come down. I have become accustomed now to velvet dresses and real lace, and do not at all fancy the idea of going back to dyed silks and bobbinet. Neither does Cherry Street look as inviting to me as it did; and I do not feel at all ready to have the silver put up for sale."

"We are not going back to Cherry Street," replied her

brother, "nor did I say positively that we must make any change at all—I merely hinted at the possibility of such a thing. I must consult a friend first, and see how my affairs stand."

Surely Florence Hamilton had not turned into a man of business; for to the well-known house did Mr. Elmly direct his steps, and soon found himself seated beside her. He staid there sometime, telling her a long story, which appeared both to surprise and annoy her. Her color changed rapidly during the relation; and at its conclusion Mr. Elmly stood proudly before her, and said,

"Now, Florence Hamilton, I have told you all—follow the dictates of your own heart, and let your decision be the truth, at least."

There was a long pause, during which Florence sat with averted face.

"Have you decided?" asked Mr. Elmly, at length.

"I have," she replied, quietly; "I feel that I never could love any *poor* man well enough to marry him."

So saying, she calmly drew off a glittering ring, and placing it in his hand, glided from the room.

Gilbert Elmly stood for a moment where she had left him; and a smile curled his lip as he thought of his boasted experience in the ways of the world. He had considered himself qualified to warn others, but had fallen into the snare himself. Experience is, after all, the best teacher; and with a thoughtful step he passed from the house.

He sat alone in his library that evening, when the door

opened softly, and Ada entered the room. Her face bore the traces of recent tears; and Mr. Elmly could see that she was very much agitated.

"Excuse me for coming in thus, when you probably wish to be alone," said she, in a gentle voice, "but Aunt Sarah has told me of your misfortunes, and I wish to express some small sense of my gratitude for all your kindness, and a hope that you will now let me make some return. You will let me help you, will you not? You do not know how much I can do."

"Bless you, Ada, for this!" replied Mr. Elmly, as he gazed fondly on the pure young face upturned to his; "so *you* do not desert me, then, the moment fortune takes his flight. But I do not need your assistance, sweet one; we are not steeped in poverty, as you seem to suppose—we must only move from here. It was foolish, though, of me, wasn't it, Ada, to seek for my pearl where all is so false and glittering? I might have known that it was only to be found amid the good and true."

I am sorry to say that Ada was by no means as grieved as she ought to have been at Mr. Elmly's misfortunes—his loss of both fortune and ladye-love; nay, before she went to sleep that night she even smiled a little, and wondered if they could not be happy again.

Mr. Elmly's aristocratic neighbors were both surprised and shocked at the sale of his house and furniture; but as his apartments were known to contain a great many beautiful things, they all flocked to the auction, and entertained each other with comments on the extravagance and ill-

judged proceedings of people who suddenly rise from nobodies, and fall back again quite as suddenly.

The sale was concluded—the house locked up by its new owner—and the Elmllys had gone no one knew where, and no one cared.

It was summer; and the air was laden with the breath of roses, while the half twilight of a lovely June evening shrouded the scene in a pleasant gloom. A beautiful country-seat on the banks of the Hudson had remained untenanted for some time. The flowers and shrubbery had been suffered to sweep over the garden walks, the borders were untrimmed, and the place neglected; but new occupants had now taken possession, and the hand of improvement was everywhere visible.

At one of the French corridors, opening on the lawn, stood Gilbert Elmly and Ada; while Miss Elmly was seated on a sofa, apparently engaged in solving some weighty problem.

At length she exclaimed, "I can not understand you at all, Gilbert, lately—you talk of poverty, and break up in the city to keep almost as expensive an establishment here; for I count up every item of expenditure, and it amounts to a sum that would not answer for a poor person."

Her brother smiled; and then, with some embarrassment, he replied, "But I am not poor."

Both Ada and Miss Elmly started in surprise, and looked as though they half suspected him to be joking; but being assured on that point, his sister exclaimed, "Well I declare! I really am—"

"What?" inquired her brother.

"Very glad indeed," she continued, "for the truth is, it is much pleasanter to be rich than poor; and after you get accustomed to style, and all that sort of thing, one doesn't mind it so much. I really felt quite bad at the idea of going back again to our old quarters; but certainly, brother, your conduct has been almost incomprehensible; are we to stay here now in peace and quietness, or make another move as soon as it suits your fancy?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Elmsly; "this is a lovely place, and we are all to remain here and become attached to it. Perhaps it was not quite right of me—indeed I acknowledge that it was not—but I could not bear the idea of being deceived, and seeing my glittering castles one by one fall headlong to the ground; so I invented the fable of having lost my fortune, and found that, when stripped of my borrowed plumes, I was but a jackdaw indeed. And not only a jackdaw, but I began to think myself something of an old fool besides, and determined that the country would be the best place for me. So here I am, and here I am resolved to stay." ●

He looked toward Ada, but she was gazing resolutely out upon the lawn.

"But, Sarah," he continued, in a slightly embarrassed tone, "I have succeeded in my search—I have found my pearl."

Miss Elmsly was quite unable to comprehend his meaning; but, when, with gentle force, he led Ada forward, a slight perception of the truth began to dawn upon her.

The idea was not altogether pleasant at first—she did not feel willing to resign her station as mistress of the establishment ; but as she glanced at the half-shrinking figure, and sweet, blushing face of Ada, better thoughts came over her, and following a good impulse, she stooped and kissed the fair young brow.

Tears sprang to the eyes of Ada at this act of tenderness, and even his sister's face showed signs of emotion ; but Gilbert Elmly was prejudiced against crying, and in a merry tone he exclaimed :

“This wise search of mine was very much like that of the old lady, who, after spending a whole day hunting for her spectacles, found them comfortably perched upon her own nose !”

THE WIDOWER;

OR, LEAVES FROM AN OLD MAID'S JOURNAL.

TUESDAY, *February 8th.*—Those noisy children of Wilbanks', they are enough to drive one crazy. Here they are, hours before decent people think of leaving their beds, up and screaming at the top of their lungs, racing about the yard like mad things, and making all sorts of unmeaning noises, just to see which can scream the loudest. It is really annoying to have such neighbors—now I hear a window raised, and there is a call of—“Saunders! Saunders! Keep off of those flower-beds!” That is Mrs. Wilbank; I know her hearty, cheerful voice. The deluded woman actually considers her children wonders, and that silly man, her husband, takes more pleasure in their society than in any other that could be offered. All this does well enough, if they did not require others to entertain the same opinion; but if one goes in there for a call, that everlasting baby is sure to make its appearance in Mrs. Wilbank's arms, who informs you, with the most perfect composure, that “when she left the child with its nurse it screamed all the time; but now she always

brings it in the room with her, so that she feels perfectly easy." "*Easy*" indeed! The Indian war-whoop would be a gentle lullaby compared to the strains which greet the ears of her visitors. Thank my fortunate stars! that I'm not married.

To-day is my birth-day. My thirty years seem like a dream, over which I glance in vain for any era of signal importance; the seasons have come and gone, and on each succeeding birth-day I remember thinking how old I should feel the next year; but now I am thirty, and I do not feel so very old yet. It seems a very short time since I was eighteen; how well I remember the day! I was cracking nuts with my teeth, and mother remonstrated against the practice. "If you do so," said she, "you will not have a tooth in your head by the time you are thirty." "*Thirty!*" how I did laugh! What should I want of teeth, or any thing else, at *thirty*? And yet here I am, at that sober, matter-of-fact age, with quite as much use for my teeth as ever I had.

I almost dread going down to breakfast this morning; Edward and Cora will be sure to banter me on being an old maid, for, at thirty, one can not very easily shake off the title. Very saucy of Cora—she is two whole years older than I am, and yet she really seems to feel younger. There actually is something quite pleasant and independent in being an old maid, but it is very provoking to be called one. People seem to regard them as targets to be aimed at with impunity; and Edward, even last night, with such a saucy look in those bright eyes of his, and a sly glance

at Cora, read from the newspaper an insolent toast, given somewhere among a party of rowdies: "Our fire-engines—may they be like old maids: ever ready, but never wanted!" "Ever ready," indeed!

That is Alice's knock. "Get up, Aunt Maggy! breakfast is ready, and this is your birth-day, you know." Oh, yes! of course they will not forget my birth-day—why can they not let it rest in peace? When a child, I longed in vain for birth-day celebrations; they passed quite as unnoticed as other days; but now the honors fall rather heavily upon me. I never was a beauty, and I must now be still less so than formerly, but, to my great joy, not a single gray hair is visible. I almost closed my eyes during the search, for fear of beholding what I did not wish to see; but a closer inspection convinced me that my fears were unfounded. That reminds me of a most uncomplimentary speech, of which, as usual, I was the unfortunate recipient; but I really hate to put it down on paper. It was last Wednesday, when I was at the hair-dresser's; and after expressing my fears that my hair would turn gray early, as that of most of our family had done, the woman innocently exclaimed—"Dear me, ma'am! you couldn't have every thing bad!" Rather a poor consolation, and more abrupt than pleasing; but one comfort, I had a cold in my head then, and I defy any one to be beautiful with that most tormenting of all afflictions—my usual complaint, by the way. Now, a cough makes one appear rather interesting, but who can feel pity for a cold in the head?

I need not have lingered so long before the glass, and have been so particular to arrange every thing to the best advantage—what if I am thirty? They all saw me last night, and no material change can have taken place since then.

After breakfast. The Rubicon is passed! After an affectionate kissing all around, I took my seat at the table, and began to feel more at my ease. But on venturing to speak of those noisy little Wilbanks, Cora looked mischievous, and that intolerable Edward exclaimed:

“Take care, Margaret! You remember the saying about bachelors’ wives and old maids’ children?”

They both laughed; while I bit my lips and remained silent.

We were sitting around the fire afterward; and I asked Cora if she did not feel very old?

“‘Old,’ indeed!” she exclaimed, “no, I feel quite as young as ever I did.”

“I suppose she will be asking me, next, if I do not feel very old,” observed Edward. “I’ll tell you what it is, Maggy, you are ten years older than either of us. You can no longer be called a chicken, can you?”

I had never experienced the least desire to be termed a chicken before; but I now felt quite melancholy that they would not acknowledge me as such.

When one lives with a married sister, she is somewhat of a cipher with respect to household affairs; and having nothing of that kind to detain me below, I hastened to my own snug little room, to collect my thoughts properly for

my thirtieth birth-day. A beautiful volume of Byron from Edward, the tiniest of watches from Cora, and a very pretty toilet-cushion, manufactured by the dimpled hands of little Alice, are lying on my dressing-table. It is pleasant to be so remembered, and they *are* very kind, if they only were not such dreadful teases!

I have been engaged in the melancholy occupation of looking over old letters. There are piles of them in my desk, and I have several times thought of burning them; but my hand has been withheld in the very act, by a reluctance to part with such speaking mementoes of the past, and thus destroy, forever, all evidences of former kindness from those whose lips have since learned to frame far different words. I have just commenced journal-keeping to-day; in my quiet life there will not be much worth recording, but I am writing for myself, and it is something of an amusement. I intend always to keep up the practice; years hence I can look back to this record of other days, and it will be like the magician's wand to bring the past vividly before me.

I was just thinking that I had never received an offer; nor do I remember ever to have fallen in love since my tenth year. I then bestowed my warm affections on a little boy in a red jacket and gilt buttons, who evidently regarded me with considerable favor. But one unlucky day, by an ill-timed stroke of wit, I lost my youthful admirer. This red jacket was his pet passion; I knew this, and in the midst of some trifling dispute, I informed him that "monkeys always wore red jackets." I could

not have inflicted a deeper wound; his jacket was laid aside—and so was I.

My tongue did me considerable mischief on several occasions. Many years later, when I began to feel less youthful than formerly, I came very near making a conquest. Having met with a bashful young man in company, I pitied his embarrassment, and exerted myself to relieve it. For several successive evenings he followed me about, and seemed to consider me as a sort of protector. But a group of mischievous girls, just released from the school-room, were quite amused with this sudden friendship; and with the determination of bringing matters to a crisis, they repeated several compliments which had been paid me by my admirer. They perceived that these speeches were by no means disagreeable, and professed themselves surprised and delighted with my powers of pleasing; at the same time begging me to divulge the secret to them. This flattered my vanity; and, puffed up with self-complacency, I replied: "The secret, girls, is this: if you wish to be particularly agreeable to a person, converse with him on subjects where he is most at home; he is much better pleased to think himself sensible than you." They listened with the utmost gravity, as though to the words of an oracle; and, the first chance they obtained, informed my new acquaintance of these sentiments. He was frightened at the idea of being managed, and studiously avoided me. Supposing his bashfulness to be stronger than ever, I noticed him more than usual—but in vain, I could not draw him into conversation. I felt rather

mortified, as I was quite unconscious of having given offense; but I experienced no deeper feeling at his departure, and certainly learned something by it; namely, to keep my own counsel, and not let my vanity get the better of my prudence.

I shall not make any calls to-day; it would seem as though every one I met knew that it was my thirtieth birth-day; and besides, it is bitter cold, and almost too much trouble to get out one's furs and put them away again; and consideration the third, as I am now an old maid, I think I shall give up writing, and devote myself to the improvement of my mind. So, Mrs. Cora, you will be obliged to set forth alone—I can not leave my coal-fire.

Now, the first question is, what can I do to signalize myself? I always had an ardent desire to be something above the common herd, but never could make it out. Manufacturing clothes for poor children is benevolent, to be sure, but I do not think I should like it; and now that youth has departed, I would aspire to fame of some description. Perhaps I might write a novel, if I could accomplish a beginning, middle, and end; but then I have no patience with lovers, and I could not very well do without them. I shall stop journalizing, and read over my Byron.

Night.—I am almost ashamed to sum up this account of my birth-day—it has been so unprofitably spent. After poring over a book, which I had read two or three times, until late in the afternoon, I began to dress for dinner;

and on descending to the parlor, I was scrutinized from top to toe by my provoking brother-in-law, who apologized by saying that he did not know me, for I really looked *pretty*! It certainly was a compliment, clumsily as he expressed it, and almost the only one that I ever received. Women *are* silly, after all (not but what men are much more so), for here was I, at the age of thirty, believing all his flattery.

There is to be a sort of variation in our quiet life; Edward talks a great deal of a Mr. Claybrook, a widower and an old friend of his, whom he has not seen for several years until to-day; but having just arrived from the West Indies, he will probably honor us with his company very often. From what Edward says, this gentleman appears to be quite a hero of romance; and I feel considerable curiosity to behold him. To begin with: he is very handsome, wealthy, and unfortunate. Noble-minded he must be, if one can judge from actions, for he was the best of sons to a widowed mother; and at her death he went to Cuba to make a fortune, and there married a beautiful creature, who almost tormented his life out. This Blanche was headstrong, selfish, and passionate; he denied her nothing that could be given with any degree of propriety, but one day, on his refusing to grant a most unreasonable request, she threw herself into the water, in a fit of passion, and he plunged in after her. It was sometime before he could succeed in grasping her; and then, quite wearied out with his exertion, he supported himself and her until a boat reached them. They used every means to restore

her, but in vain ; his beautiful wife was a corpse, and his left arm has been entirely useless ever since. Wayward as she was, he felt his wife's loss deeply, for he really loved her, and has since remained a widower. This I have gathered from Edward, and his description seems quite perfect.

What nonsense I have written ! What is it to me whether he is unfortunate or not ? There are plenty of other unfortunate men in the world ; and what to me are the concerns of my brother-in-law's visitors ? I have certainly been more foolish on this my thirtieth birth-day than I ever remember to have been in my whole life before. This journal-keeping is a very good thing ; it shows one every silly thought and action in a much stronger light than they otherwise appear.

February 12th.—I have not written in my journal for several days. I could not seem to find time, for my wardrobe appeared to demand so much attention that it has kept me constantly busy. All of a sudden I find myself most remarkably destitute of clothes, and shopping is an occupation that consumes a great deal of time. Cora has persuaded me into a very foolish thing—a white hat and feathers for a single woman of my age is very much too dressy ; but after I had once tried it on my head she would not allow me to take it off—she said that it was the most becoming thing I had ever put on. I took it ; but I could not help thinking of Mrs. Cleopatra Skewerton, in “Dombey and Son,” and wondered if I did not resemble her.

It is very pleasant to have people paying you compliments, even though you do not believe them (and I certainly do not). Edward wonders if I am not growing prettier, or whether I dress more becomingly than I did. Well, I really believe that I have done up my hair! How could I be so foolish as to torture myself with curl-papers! Mr. Claybrook is coming here next week—probably to take tea and spend the evening.

Monday, 14th.—Here, in my own little room, I can at length draw a long breath. I know of nothing more applicatory to my feelings than a couple of lines, which are constantly in my mind, but I forget where I have seen them.

“And woe is me!” the ballie cried,
“That I should see this day!”

We expected Mr. Claybrook, to be sure, but had quite made up our minds that he would not come till evening. It was about four o'clock, and we were seated at the dinner-table in the back parlor. I had been very much occupied all day, and while making my toilet for dinner, the bell rang before I had concluded; I therefore went down with my hair in papers—also, for greater beauty, retaining my morning wrapper. This was bad enough, but not the worst: I had just begun to recover from the effects of a very hot pickle, and my eyes and nose were of the color which my cheeks should have been; this, with the tears which were quite visible, gave me the appearance of having just been crying—when the door was thrown open, and Mr. Claybrook announced!

For a moment I sat quite stunned, and heard him say, "The servant told me that you were at dinner, but using the privilege of an old friend, I followed him in here." If people were only aware of the annoyance they cause when they "use the privilege of old friends," and "will not stand upon ceremony!" "You did perfectly right," said my brother-in-law; while I thought he had done perfectly wrong. So much for first appearances.

How ridiculous and disappointing it is to picture from description the appearance of some individual whom you have never seen, and how provoking of him to look totally different. *My* Mr. Claybrook, and Edward's Mr. Claybrook are two distinct and separate personages. I had fancied a gentleman of about six feet high, with very dark hair, very dark eyes, and bronzed complexion; a pensive countenance, and beautiful mouth, that rarely smiled, but when it did so far relax, white, shining teeth gleamed out like rows of pearls. His appearance was to be extremely stylish, with a certain "keep-your-distance" kind of air; and every word he uttered was to be characterized by rare intelligence, refinement, and brilliancy. Now for what he is. When I had at length mustered sufficient boldness to raise my eyes, I beheld a well-dressed gentleman of middle height, with his left arm in a sling, which gave him rather an interesting appearance—though he had by no means the half-bandit look I had pictured, and his hair and eyes were not near so dark; but one comfort, they were not blue—I am so tired of blue-eyed people. So that I have seen Mr. Claybrook, and he has seen *me*.

In an agony of fear, I motioned to Edward and Cora not to introduce me, and as soon as possible slipped from the room, and gained my own quiet dormitory. I made my toilet as I had originally intended it, and hastened back again; but he was gone. Edward says that he staid but a short time; and it will probably be long before we see him again, as he is going immediately to Washington on business. So ends this day of misfortunes.

Edward and Cora have been laughing both at me and Mr. Claybrook. They insist that we were both struck dumb with intense admiration of each other; and they tried to persuade me that I looked much worse than I really did. The worst that Mr. Claybrook can say or think is, that he saw an old maid, in morning-gown and curl-papers, seated at the dinner-table, crying. It certainly was no fault of mine, and perhaps he did not even look at me after all. I do not even believe he would remember me if he saw me again.

Cora ought to be ashamed of herself; she laughs at his carrying his arm in a sling, and says that it is ridiculous for an injury received so long since. I am sure that it looks much better than if it hung powerless at his side; but she ridicules the idea of his having but one arm altogether. I remonstrated with her on this unfeeling conduct, and grew so warm in his defense, that before long their ridicule was turned upon me. I can not hear the absent abused, and, above all, one who brought this deformity upon himself by his courage and self-sacrifice in behalf of another, and that other so unworthy. For my part, I

think it makes him appear more interesting, and so I told them; but they pelted me so unmercifully with ridicule and laughter, that I was forced to make a hasty retreat.

March 13th.—Well, I really am surprised! Having put on the white hat and feathers, and every thing to correspond, I sallied forth with Cora for an aimless stroll. As we sauntered leisurely along, we encountered Mr. Claybrook, proceeding in an opposite direction, who immediately stopped on seeing us; and after paying his respects to Cora, was formally introduced to me, whom he honored with an exquisite bow and a beaming smile. What a difference there is in bows, from the awkward nod to that graceful lifting of the hat, which Mr. Claybrook executes to perfection! I should sooner have expected to meet almost any one else than him, but he told us that he returned sooner than he intended; and although a surprise, it has certainly been a more agreeable one than the dinner-table scene. Mr. Claybrook walked some distance with us, and promised to call very soon. Since our return, Cora has been trying to persuade me that I really am a beauty, and says that there is no knowing what that hat and feathers may yet accomplish. What a very silly speech! and how much more silly of me to put it down!

March 20th.—Mr. Claybrook has been here again, and this time I looked more like a lady. He is certainly a very intellectual man, and a very entertaining one. He has so many amusing stories to relate—no one ever did meet with such adventures before; but I must confess that I am disappointed not to find the half-melancholy coun-

tenance and pensive manner I had pictured. It is so provoking to have in one's mind a certain standard of perfection, and then find yourself drawn in to admire a totally different style. My *beau-ideal* of manly beauty was seven feet high, with breadth in proportion—though I am rather under-sized myself; but now I begin to think that such a figure might be clumsy, and very much in the way.

It is strange, to be sure, but I seem to have had Mr. Claybrook very much to myself this evening. Mr. Pelman called in, and Cora seemed to occupy herself entirely with him, only putting in a word now and then; while Mr. Claybrook, Edward, and I, formed a coterie of ourselves. Life in the West Indies must be very beautiful, according to his description, but I do not think I should like the heat, and the slaves, and the insects, to say nothing of snakes—my mortal horror and aversion. But then it is always summer there, and the perfume of the orange blossoms, through open windows, must be perfectly delightful. Discovering my fondness for flowers, Mr. Claybrook has promised to bring me some seed of a beautiful West Indian plant that blooms but once in two years. I should like to have it, but he will probably forget all about it; people—that is, people whom I have met with—are so apt to promise things and never bring them; and I am not one of that lucky class who are always receiving presents.

March 21st.—It is very strange that they will not let me alone—they appear to delight in teasing me. I can not converse with a gentleman for a single evening, with-

out their saying all sorts of absurd things. Even Mr. Claybrook they appear to consider a fit subject for mirth; and Edward says, so provokingly,

"Why, Maggy, you and Mr. Claybrook appear to suit each other exactly. It is a very good speculation, I can assure you—you had better set your cap for him."

"*Set my cap for him*, indeed!" I replied, indignantly, "a man's love that comes not without seeking, is not worth having; and such a speech is particularly foolish to me, for an old maid I am, and an old maid I intend to remain."

"Old maids are not apt to be quite so sentimental," said Cora, laughing. "But what will you bet," she exclaimed, suddenly, "that the end of the year, or your next birth-day, will find you an old maid still? I will wager half-a-dozen pairs of gloves that before then you will be obliged to lay aside all claim to the title."

"Very well," said I, "I will accept your offer, for half-a-dozen pairs of gloves will not come amiss, and I wish to punish you for your absurd remarks."

They have really made me feel unpleasant. Perhaps Mr. Claybrook, too, thinks that I have exerted myself to be agreeable—that I am trying to *catch* him; far superior as he seems to others I have seen, he *is* a man, and men are so notoriously conceited. The idea overwhelms me with mortification; perhaps I *have* been too forward, and ready to agree with every thing he said, and he may even now regard me with contempt. The next time he comes, I will let him see that I can entertain opinions separate

from his ; I will treat him coldly and politely, or else have a regular dispute. It is very disagreeable, though, to quarrel with people—I wish that Edward and Cora would let me alone.

March 25th.—I should now be quite at ease with respect to my dignity ; I have succeeded in making myself as disagreeable as possible. My conscience rather smote me when Mr. Claybrook produced the seeds so promptly ; but, after all, what do a few seeds amount to ? He may have brought them just to lead me on to make a fool of myself. I was extremely distant, and opposed almost every thing he said. I thought that he once or twice looked rather surprised, as well he might, at conduct so different from my former manner ; but one piece of actual rudeness, of which I was guilty, has really made me feel ashamed of myself. It was all Cora's fault—she is always leading me into some scrape of that sort. She made a direct attack upon me, before Mr. Claybrook, by asking me if I did not like to see a large ring on a gentleman's finger. She had just expressed herself delighted with a magnificent diamond worn by Mr. Claybrook on his little finger—the only thing about him which I can condemn ; and, although quite aware of my sentiments, she applied to me as though confident of my assent. I felt myself turning all manner of colors, and pretended not to hear her question ; but she repeated it in a louder tone, and I was forced to say,

“You know that I do not, Cora—but that is no rule for others.”

“Oh, yes,” observed Mr. Claybrook, with a smile,

"every one's opinion is of consequence. But, Miss Earleton," he continued, "you must be kind enough to give us your reasons; perhaps you will convince us all."

What could I say? How extricate myself from the dilemma in which they had involved me? It was really cruel for poor unoffending me to be led into such a scrape; but an answer was expected, and some reason must be given. I do not think I ever uttered but one falsehood; and although a child, the lesson I then received inspired me with such a contempt for it—it seemed to me something so mean and despicable—that I could scarcely tell another to save my life. Even white lies, lies of politeness, which people constantly indulge in, I could not bring myself to commit; and now, when asked the why and wherefore, my reply was more truthful than courteous.

"You must excuse me, Mr. Claybrook," said I, "and remember that I did not seek the argument—I was drawn into it; my reason for disliking to see rings worn by gentlemen is, that to me they have a finical and foppish appearance. But there are probably few who coincide with me; and my opinion, of course, can not be of the least importance to you."

There is something rather odd about him, which I can not quite understand; instead of saying that my opinion *was* of importance, or any thing of the kind, he repeated the word "foppish," and seemed to fall into a reverie. Nothing more passed between us during the evening; but Cora has just told me, that after observing me for some time, he remarked to her that there was something very noble

and truthful in my countenance, and that I appeared to be quite above the meanness of descending to falsehood or equivocation, even in the most trifling things. I understand your irony, my good sir; and though I can not blame you for it after my rudeness, I am by no means so foolish as to believe it to be intended for a compliment.

All the satisfaction that I obtained from Cora, for her troublesome question, was, that she wished to see what I would say, and what he would say. A laudable curiosity.

March 30th.—I scarcely know what to think of Mr. Claybrook; whether, to use a vulgar expression, he is “making game of me,” or if he really admires my bluntness as much as he professes to. He came up to me this evening with a smile, as he said,

“I have reflected on the subject of rings, Miss Earlton, and now confess myself very much of your manner of thinking. It is a trifle, to be sure, but people should be particular even in trifles. The diamond is now at the jeweler’s, where I have left it to be re-set for a lady to whom I intend making it a present, if she will honor me by accepting it.”

It was very foolish of me, but I wished that he had not told me that. I wonder who the lady is? Some one young and beautiful, I suppose. Heigho!

It is certainly very singular, and provoking, too, for I am sure it is no fault of mine, but my conversation with Mr. Claybrook appears now to be one continual dispute. I do not know how it is, but, before I am in the least aware of it, he has drawn me into a controversy, during

which I am compelled to say many rude things for the sake of truth. He contrives to draw forth my sentiments and opinions, without enlightening me as to his, which seems hardly fair dealing; but I begin to be very much interested in him—he is so odd, and different from other men, that I even look forward to our disputes with a degree of pleasure. I really need Edward and Cora to restore me to my senses, provoking as they are.

“Well,” exclaims my brother-in-law, “this certainly is the most curious courtship I ever beheld! Here are Mr. Claybrook and Maggy delighted with each other, yet quarreling every time they meet, and really unhappy if a civil word chances to pass between them.”

“All’s well that ends well,” observed Cora, sagely; “and Maggy seems to have hit upon the very method most likely to captivate her incomprehensible West Indian.”

There it is again; perhaps he really thinks I quarrel on purpose to please him! The troublesome man! I wish he was—*here*. Now, Margaret Earleton, you are the most ridiculous old maid that ever arrived at the unromantic age of thirty. Look in the glass, and tell me what you see. You behold a face that does, to be sure, look about as well as ever it did; but in its best estate it is not one likely to do much in the way of captivation. Add to this a manner rude, quarrelsome, and repelling, and then bring up Mr. Claybrook in all his attractions, and ask yourself if you have not lost your reason—if, indeed, you ever possessed any.

April 3d.—We have not quarreled this evening. I do not know why it is, but I feel quite melancholy ; and yet it is not a dark, overburdening melancholy—only a pleasant sadness. Mr. Claybrook has been repeating to me passages of his ~~former~~ life ; tears stood in his eyes when he spoke of his beautiful wife, and his tone was sad, as he said,

“The great fault in her character was *want of truth* ; I loved her deeply, fondly, but I could not trust her implicitly—I could not *depend* upon her. There are few, besides yourself, Miss Earleton, to whom I should speak so freely ; but you possess the jewel which my poor Blanche lacked—you are truth itself.”

Old as I am, I blushed deeply, and Mr. Claybrook fixed his eyes upon me with a penetrating expression that disconcerted me still more. I wish he would not stare so ; it is quite a habit with him.

April 20th.—Mr. Claybrook has not been here for a long time. They told me that I had frightened him away with my quarrelsome temper, and I believed them ; but I now hold in my hand a small packet that makes me tremble with a pleasant kind of fear. We were all commenting upon his prolonged absence, when the parcel was brought in ; and on reading the superscription, they handed it to me. I have not opened it yet—I *dare* not ; but Edward says that it is Mr. Claybrook’s handwriting, and both he and Cora looked so knowing and mischievous that I was glad to make my escape as soon as possible.

I have opened it. Out rolled a glittering ring, and I

recognized the splendid diamond which had occasioned my first rude speech. I thought that there might be another Margaret Earleton, and laughed at the idea of appropriating it to myself; but I read the letter, and, impossible as it seemed, became convinced that it was really me. Thus runs the letter:

"I have sent the ring—for it was that very evening that I first became fascinated by the unswerving truth which has characterized your every word and action. I have watched you narrowly when you least supposed it; I have drawn you into argument, and tried both temper and principle; I have held the jewel in various lights, but it remains pure and faultless. I have passed my time in solitude—have examined my own heart, and became satisfied. I now ask you, dear M——, to accompany me on my pilgrimage through life, and await my answer from the lips of truth."

"What can I say? Cora has just read the letter, and to her I repeated the question.

"What can you say?" she replied, gravely, "why, tell him, of course, that such a thing is altogether out of the question—that you can not call to mind any conduct of yours which could lead him to entertain such erroneous ideas—that you shall always esteem him as a friend, and all that sort of thing, but you find yourself under the necessity of declining his obliging offer."

But *do* I? They will certainly laugh at me if I write an assent, but what do I care? I am not the first person who has done such a thing. Cora adds, in a tone of con-

cern, that "it is a pity to give up the ring." Not so much so as to give up—

June 1st.—That ever I should live to write this! *It is my wedding-day!* I am attired in bridal robes, but I have snatched a few moments to complete my journal. It is the first day of summer, and far more lovely than summer ever yet appeared. The trees wear that fresh, beautiful green, that hangs in such delicate sprays from every bough—the birds are raising a complete concert in my ears, and the sky beams brightly with the hue of faith. The little Wilbanks are making more noise than ever, but even their voices are music to-day. Beautiful, blessed is it to live but for the loved one! to be always near him, ever at his side with a mission of love; to feel the beating heart—response to those solemn words, "until death do us part."

Cora has claimed her gloves already, and I fulfilled my ~~finger~~ most honorably. I am laughing at my former ~~idea~~ of continuing this journal-keeping through life; I do not feel as much interested in it as formerly. But what shall I do with these stray leaves? I shrink from the idea of appearing in print, but it is a duty I owe the public; I would diffuse my happiness around; therefore let them laugh and be merry over this record of an old maid's folly.

AMIABILITY, WITH "VARIATIONS."

SOMEbody has said (I think it's not in "Jane Eyre"), "What's in a name?" and no doubt he made the observation with that kind of an air which denotes a consciousness of having said a good thing; but with respect to the very desirable possession which forms the subject of this sketch, there is certainly far more in a name than any thing else. I fear that I must confess to a prejudice against "amiable people," as the majority of those with whom I have been acquainted invariably turned out any thing but amiable. In the nursery, my appellation was generally "spitfire," and Miss Ella was always "so bad, that nothing could be done with her." I don't care if it does look egotistical to talk so much about myself, and put in so many I's; if not egotistical, I should be sure of being something else that did not meet people's views of right and proper; and never having had justice done me before, I am resolved to lay my case before the public.

In early childhood my favorite aversion was an "amiable little girl," who came regularly, once a week, to play

with me, attired in a white apron, flaxen curls, and light-blue eyes. This interesting piece of amiability invariably took possession of my best doll a few moments after her *entrée*, crying if I demanded restoration of my rightful property—when I was always told “not to tease Miss Alice, poor little thing! who was so good and quiet that no one could help loving her.”

She was remarkably good, poor little dear! and very quiet, too, when allowed to have every thing she wanted, and treated as tenderly as if she had been a wax doll. Alice never cried very loud, but her tears were ready to flow on every occasion; once I looked at her pretty hard, and the “pearly drops” were soon meandering down her cheeks; *she* was called the pattern child, and held up for me to copy till I almost hated the sight of her—while I, whom they often lashed into ungovernable fury by injustice and ill-timed harshness, was denominated “a complete little vixen,” and other children received almost as many instructions to beware of me as if I had been a mad dog.

Miss Alice preserved her interesting sensibility during the whole of the time I passed in her company at school, and she was enabled to carry her every point by that fortunate accomplishment of crying easily. To be sure, as she grew older, she often received the appellation of “cry-baby;” but her schoolmates were careful not to provoke those floods of tears which were dismal to behold, and worked upon their feelings most powerfully; for Alice could cry without making her eyes and nose red—

she only looked the picture of silent suffering. It was seldom that I ever did cry, for passion generally triumphed over feeling; but when I did succeed in working myself up to the desired pitch, I was generally told that, "having made a perfect fright of myself, I had better go bathe my eyes, and keep quiet for a while."

One of the rules in our school was, that if any girl came in after the class then reciting had answered questions once around, she must forfeit her place, and take her station at the foot. Alice's talents never stood very high in the estimation of the teachers, but somehow or other she contrived to maintain a place near the head—I verily believe through the kindness of friends on either side, who prompted her when wrong. Well, one morning in she came after the lesson had commenced, glanced tremblingly around and perceiving that the head girl was answering a second question, with sad steps and slow, she took her station at the foot of the class. The girls all looked sorry and Alice, reading the expression of the countenances about her, grew more and more pensive-looking; and finally, when it came to her turn, answered the question with a burst of tears.

The lesson was interrupted; and after a few moments' conversation, the teacher said:

"Miss Dilmore, you can resume your place in the class."

Alice was warmly welcomed back by the friends who separated to give her room; and the teacher observed, by way of apology:

"I do not send Alice there on account of her crying—that is a very silly and childish habit; but she has been far too tenderly nurtured. (She had, indeed.) Circumstances have probably retarded her this morning."

No doubt they had—circumstances always do; and if the restored place was not a premium for crying, I was very much at a loss to know what it was given for, but resolved to say nothing unless placed in a similar situation.

A short time after, I, too, transgressed, and that, too, when my place at the head required constant attention; as I entered the room, smiles of triumph passed down the class, and one or two pointed to the foot. I took my place in silence, but waited in vain for the anxiously-expected permission to advance higher; a question was passed to me; I tried and tried in vain to weep and look interesting; not a tear could I force. A look of angry discontent was probably the expression my countenance wore; I made no answer to the question, and as I could not very well go down any lower, they allowed me to remain where I was. I resolved this all over in my own mind, coolly and without anger; but place it in whatever light I would, conscience still cried out, "unjust!" It *was* unjust, and I soon came to the conclusion why it was so. They knew very well that, if not dislodged from my eminence by some accident, I was *likely* to maintain it during the whole of the season; for, "although I say it, that should not say it," I was allowed to be one of the wonders of the school, and most tenderly cared for toward

examination, for then I shone as a bright, particular star :

"And still they gazed, and still their wonder grew,
That one small head contained e'en all I knew."

But, above all things, do not feel flattered because you are called *smart*; for, if you are, people will deny you all feeling and sympathy, and be forever making you presents of writing-desks—considering you as a kind of nondescript animal that is content to live among pens and paper, and breathe no air but what is redolent of freshly-printed books. Dear me! where was I? The title and subject are not much alike, but now, as the children say, "I will behave better."

Some people, if they smile pretty often, and talk not at all (thereby being sure of saying nothing to the disadvantage of others), are called "amiable;" and others again may try all their lives, and not enjoy that enviable distinction. Although convinced, from what every body said, that my nature must be an uncommonly bad one, I had heard that natures could be altered, and made to look almost as well as new; and, when a little girl at boarding-school, I resolved to try what could be done with mine. By giving up every thing I had, and never contradicting any one, I had succeeded pretty well, and actually become quite a pet with several of the large girls, when a most unfortunate present clouded my happiness for some time. This was a pair of dear little scissors, meant expressly to scollop out worked muslin, and which I found very convenient; a discovery speedily made by the others, and about

forty times a day was I besieged for the loan of my scissors. For some time I steadfastly refused all applications, and was called "cross thing," "disagreeable girl," and "mean, disobliging, and ill-natured," till I could bear it no longer, and resolved to sacrifice my scissors. I did so, lost them, and recovered my character.

School-girls always have some fancy or other, which is pursued until quite worn out; and at one time the passion raged for braids of hair worn on the wrist to remember dear friends, who, as they were only seen every day, and all day, seemed in danger of being forgotten. Black, brown, chestnut, red, golden, and flaxen hair were mingled incongruously together; and each was ambitious of rivaling the others in the number and variety of her bracelets. This was a trying season for poor me, who toiled harder for a good character, than any hero for his well-earned laurels. Somebody had kindly told me that my hair was the only decent thing about me, and must not be cut; it reached far below my waist, excelled all the others in quality, quantity, and color, and was considered a most desirable addition to the number of locks already in their possession. But I was by no means disposed to part with it; I knew that if I gave to one, I must give to all, and steadfastly shook off the eager petitioners who crowded around whenever I took down my beautiful hair. Twenty times a day was I met by grieved and sorrowful friends, who, with scissors in hand, sought to bring me to my senses, but in vain; until at last Mary Rone, my roommate and confidante, rushed up to me one day, burst into

tears as she placed a lock of flame-colored hair in my hands, and informing me that she could stand it no longer, wished to know if I would not give her a small piece of my treasured hair on the occasion of her going away, perhaps forever ?

Human heart could not resist this touching appeal ; the scissors were produced, my hair was loosened ; and as the news spread about that I was giving a lock of hair to Mary Rone, "who was going away," those who *were not* going away, thought it would be a good chance to attack me ; and as my *friends* rushed in, I could have exclaimed :

"They gather—
See ! how fast they gather !"

I begged, and entreated, but it was of no use ; twenty pairs of scissors were instantly produced ; twenty hands grasped my hair, and clip, clip, clip, until I verily thought I should have to purchase a wig. I gazed mournfully on each long, shining lock, as my merciless tormentors held them up before me ; but to all my complaints, they replied that it was a proof of their love. I tried hard to be contented with this, but philosophy failed to convince me that all the love in the world could compensate for my loss of hair. I looked in the glass at length—oh, horrors ! at least one-half my hair had disappeared ! and conscience whispered that, perhaps, amiability had degenerated into weakness, in thus parting with my chief ornament, to gratify those who cared nothing about me.

There are some people who, with the sweetest manners

in the world, would scarcely stretch forth their hand to help another. I was once paying a visit to a very sweet old Quaker lady, who had always seemed to me the very personification of amiability and perfection. With her, every one was "dear," every one was good, every one was lovely, and she had a sweet smile for all. Among other things to recommend our Quaker friend, was a large and beautiful garden. As we walked through the paths admiring the flowers and shrubs, one of the company, a child, pointed to a cluster of pinks, saying, with a wistful glance: "These are pretty flowers—I'd like to have one." "Would thee, dear?" replied cousin Rachel, with one of her benignant smiles, as she quietly passed by without gratifying the young visitor. The child was astonished; she had felt the influence of the smile, and yet on glancing at her hand it was empty—she knew not what to make of it.

And yet there are some characters in the world who are really amiable; who are continually benefiting others, and who, because they possess natural energy, instead of that insipid milk-and-water manner, are exposed to insidious remarks, and rarely receive that praise which is their due. Such a one was Nelly Upton. She had the greatest reverence for truth, and would not hesitate to speak as she felt, even at the risk of giving offense; and yet she was by no means one of those people who are forever saying disagreeable things, and then dignifying their bluntness with the name of candor. Perhaps being the eldest of a large family, had given an uncommon degree of energy

to her character, for she was one of those persons who are always sought in any trouble or difficulty.

A story often told about Nelly, took place when she was traveling in one of the North River steamboats. Not being very hungry, she soon dispatched her own supper, and then fixed her attention on her opposite neighbor—a large, stout woman, who was devouring pancakes in a most alarming manner. Nelly was not conscious of staring rudely, and amused herself by counting the pancakes as they disappeared. The woman, seeing her so quiet, thought she must be watching, and fixing her eyes on the young girl, exclaimed, rather suddenly :

"Well, Miss! you seem to be watching me very intently—pray, and how many cakes have I eaten?"

"Just twenty-four, ma'am," was the reply.

The peal of laughter which followed these words caused Nelly to start and look about her; the fat woman looked disconcerted, and the other passengers were bursting with merriment at this abrupt answer. But Nelly's energetic character was often of material use to others; "and thereby hangs a tale."

It was toward the close of a long summer day, and the people of Deerfield, like a great many other people, were often to be found at their windows. Two or three of the womankind were glancing up and down the street from the blinds of a very pleasant-looking house, and bowing

and smiling to their acquaintance as they passed along. Suddenly, however, the countenance of one of the young girls assumed a look of mingled amusement and alarm, as she called out hastily :

"Laura, Laura! quick! shut the window! Dear me! I am afraid she will see us."

The blinds were hastily drawn down, as their mother inquired: "What is it, you silly girls? What caused that scream, Kate?"

"Why," replied the younger sister, laughing merrily, "she saw Mrs. Bolton over the way, and not approving in this case, of 'seeing and being seen,' she hastily withdrew. Your sentiments were not the same last night, Kate, when young Hilson passed along."

"I do wish you would be quiet," returned Kate, blushing, and looking a little angry, "and watch and see where she stops. I wonder who is to be the victim to-night?"

Laura, still laughing, returned to the window and arranged the blind so that she could look out, while passers-by were not able to see in.

The object of this commotion was a very quiet-looking old lady, with a black hat and veil, and an immense feather fan. She belonged to the class of pretty old ladies, with bright black eyes, and a still fresh complexion. Her face was not as old as her figure, for she stooped a little, and leaned heavily on the arm of her companion—a meek, quiet-looking man, apparently rather younger than herself. They walked deliberately along a few steps farther, and

then stopped before a large double house ; when the old lady talked earnestly for a few moments to her husband, who seemed to give a sign of assent, and then both proceeded up the steps.

Laura remained at her post until the front door had closed behind them ; and then dancing into the middle of the room, exclaimed, in high glee :

"As I live, if she hasn't gone to Nelly Upton's!"

"*Nelly Upton's!*" repeated Kate, in surprise ; while their mother remarked, "If she has, she has met her match for once. I wonder how Nelly will proceed?"

"I hope she will tell her," replied Kate, "how ridiculous is it for her, when she is as well as any body, to make people sit up with her. I never heard before of people having night-watchers who went out regularly to hunt them up. She is as bad as the plague, for every one runs in at the sight of her."

"Why doesn't she make Mr. Bolton sit up?" observed Laura ; "I do not see the wisdom of taking a husband if he is to be of no use."

"*He*, poor man!" rejoined their mother, compassionately, "he looks as if he had never had a wink of sleep since their marriage. They say he is the kindest husband that ever lived, and instead of getting provoked, quietly bears with every thing."

"Well," said Kate, "now the old lady is fairly in for it. Wouldn't it be a treat, Laurie, to see Nelly when she asks her to come and sit up with her ? It is rather strange,

by-the-by, that she never favored us: I was trembling just now for fear that she was coming.

"You may consider yourself pretty safe," returned Laurie, mischievously; "Naught's never in danger."

And how did Nelly proceed?

But, to begin with, Mrs. Bolton was the wife of Mr. Bolton; and not having any children, or much else to occupy her mind, she had for the last twenty years been employed in taking care of herself, and convincing her husband that never was man so blessed as he was. He had heard this so often stated as an incontrovertible fact, that he came at last to believe it, and felt humbly conscious that devoted affection and reverential regard on his part could alone make up for his wife's unheard-of condescension in marrying him. Not that Mrs. Bolton was the least bit of a termagant—far from it; she always spoke low and gently, and I do not believe a single harsh word passed between them all the time they were married. Mrs. Bolton was a sweet-tempered, indolent kind of an old lady, and although as fresh as a rose, she had worked herself up into the idea that her health was in a very critical state, and required constant care and attention. At length her spirits became extremely low, and, impressed with the idea that she would die suddenly, and alone, she declared that she must have night-watchers. This certainly was a species of monomania, and the village doctor, not knowing what better to do, gave it as his opinion that the fancy should be humored. Poor Mr. Bolton had, with the most unwearying affection, day after

day, worn himself out, scratched his face and hands, and almost torn the clothes off his back, plunging into briars and bramble-bushes after unheard-of herbs; and now he good-humoredly took up his post by the bedside of his pretty, troublesome wife. For about a year he managed to keep very wide awake indeed; but while he became thin and sickly-looking, Mrs. Bolton was as well as ever, and bid fair to wear out several lives in preserving her own. So they were obliged to look up a substitute, and fortunately selected an "amiable girl," who kept an unwearying watch, night after night, and, to ease the mind of the invalid, even promised to marry Mr. Bolton in case of her decease. This was all very well; but human nature can not stand every thing, and poor Clara Santon, having impaired her own health, was obliged to forego her nightly employment.

Mrs. Bolton thought it "very cruel of Clara to leave her," and began to look about for any who could be pressed into active service, till, from being an unheard-of, it came to be a common occurrence, to see the couple perambulating the streets in search of a victim. Every day toward dusk they sallied forth, and as pity was the predominant feeling, few could refuse to sit up a night now and then with the old lady, who persisted in deceiving herself. She had now fixed upon Nelly Upton, who, after a few moments' consideration, expressed her willingness to perform the duty; and Mrs. Bolton, who had taken a fancy to her cheerful countenance and pleasant manners, departed quite satisfied.

As evening drew on, Nelly produced a small carpet-bag, which performed the office of *sac-de-unit*, and began folding her night-dress.

"Why, Nelly," said her mother, smiling, "that is quite a useless ceremony; Mrs. Bolton's watchers have very little occasion for such articles, and if you expect to sleep at all to-night, I may as well undeceive you before you go."

"I certainly *do* expect to sleep as usual," was the reply. "The old lady has troubled the community quite long enough, and she shall sleep, too, to-night, or my name is not Nelly Upton."

A smile passed round the circle at Nelly's determined air; and taking up the carpet-bag, she started for the scene of action. The evening passed very pleasantly till about ten o'clock, when Mrs. Bolton, drawing forth her watch, remarked to her better half:

"My dear, it is time for you to go to bed."

The obedient husband took up his candle, and bidding the ladies "good night," departed.

No sooner had the door closed behind him, than Nelly, as if it had been the most natural thing in the world, said: "Now it is time for *you* to go, Mrs. Bolton."

A pair of very handsome dark eyes were opened to their widest extent, at this remark, and Mrs. Bolton looked as if she could have replied: "*Me* sleep? One of *my* noble race *sleep*? I never did such a thing in my life!" This is to be found somewhere in a story of a wife who never slept, and drove her husband to commit suicide.

But Mrs. Bolton, whatever she may have looked, contented herself with saying: "It is of no use for *me* to go to bed, my dear child; when you are so unfortunate as to be awake all night, it is far more pleasant to sit up."

Nelly glanced at a small table, on which was set out biscuit, cake, and various eatables, which, together with two or three fascinating books, containing marks, showed very plainly how the nights were generally spent. No wonder that sleep refused to visit either watched or watcher. But Nelly came, resolved to effect a reformation; therefore, quietly, yet in a tone of command, she replied:

"Oh, but I intend that you *shall* sleep; follow my directions, and you will soon see their efficacy. Now," she continued, with a smile, "I shall be a very strict nurse; if you feel hungry, we will eat a piece of cake, and then put these things out of the way."

The invalid, quite astonished at these strange proceedings, made no objection; the cake was eaten—and Nelly soon had the satisfaction of seeing her patient comfortably established for the night. From her wakeful habits, not feeling inclined to sleep, Mrs. Bolton derived some satisfaction in watching the movements of Nelly, as she proceeded to set things in order; and this being completed, she placed herself before the glass, and began deliberately to put up her front hair in papers. Mrs. Bolton raised herself up a little at this, and feeling convinced that girls were the vainest creatures in existence, watched her proceedings with still more interest. At length the hair was

arranged to the owner's satisfaction, who forthwith proceeded to array herself in her usual night-dress.

"Why, Nelly, *Nelly!*" exclaimed Mrs. Bolton, in alarm, "what *are* you going to do?"

"Going to bed, of course," replied Nelly, with a very determined air; "what should I do?"

The old lady was fairly stunned—speechless with surprise. Nelly then took possession of a vacant couch in the corner, where she could watch the movements of her charge without being seen herself. Mrs. Bolton gazed wildly around, and not perceiving her, cried out:

"Nelly, Nelly! Surely you are not gone to bed! Why, what kind of watching is this? How could you leave me so?"

But Nelly was, or pretended to be, roaming at large in the land of dreams; and the old lady's alarm increased tenfold.

"Dear me!" she continued, "I do believe she has gone to sleep! *Nelly! Nelly!*—Nelly! Nelly! Nelly!—Nell! Nell! Nell!"

Mrs. Bolton fairly sung herself into a pleasant slumber; and the cause of this commotion, after a laugh at her patient's discomfiture, followed her example, and slept soundly till morning.

At breakfast, Mrs. Bolton observed, with a sort of unwilling acknowledgment: "Well, I do believe I had a short nap last night—the first time in many years."

"Had you, really?" exclaimed her husband, in delight.

"The 'short nap,'" said Nelly, with a smile, "was a good night's rest."

"So it was," rejoined Mrs. Bolton, balancing her teaspoon on her cup, "so it really was; and I believe I owe it to you, Nelly."

"Shall you want me again to-night?" inquired her companion, "I do not feel very tired yet."

Mrs. Bolton glanced at Nelly—then at her husband—and all of a sudden perceived something very interesting in the garden, for she stood looking out of the window sometime.

The tax upon night watchers ceased, and Nelly returned home in triumph.



TAKING TEA SOCIABLY.

FROM MY BUDGET OF ADVENTURES.

IT was a most lovely afternoon in June, neither inconveniently warm nor uncomfortably chilly; the birds were singing merrily around, the breeze came clear and refreshing, and an inexpressible gladness seemed to be borne on the very atmosphere, while I stood in a state of considerable satisfaction before the toilet-glass in my own particularly pleasant little room. Not that I was in the least vain; oh, no! I do not think I was, because I remember wishing that my nose was not quite so *retrousse*, and wondering if people could have the assurance to call my eyes green, though, to tell the truth, I did not exactly know what else to call them myself. I was going out to tea that afternoon; not to meet a bevy of girls and get up a complete frolic, but to see an old friend of my mother's, a regular married woman, with several responsibilities, who claimed all her care and attention; a place where there was not an article in the shape of a beau, and yet I wished to be particularly fascinating, interesting, and

agreeable. I wore nothing but a simple white muslin, to be sure, yet I think I have seldom, if ever, taken as much pains with my toilet as on that particular afternoon. I brushed and brushed my hair, which would friz in spite of me ; and at last, finding that I could do no better, I concluded to be sweet simplicity in natural curls and unadorned innocence. I was pretty short, and pretty stout, and not much calculated for a heroine at best, and yet, as I clasped a certain little gold cross around my neck, I fell to building castles in the air, and dreaming scenes from life, in which I figured as chief performer.

Must I explain ? It is rather awkward to expose one's own little plots and maneuvers, but I really see no help for it, as this particular one happens to be the center around which all my movements revolved. We lived in the village, which was quite a pretty collection of half houses half villas, but still it was not *quite* the country. There were no handsome edifices standing far back from the road, with noble, English-looking lawns in front, and endless gardens and a beautiful water-prospect back. Oh, no ! every thing looked far more exact and methodical, and an actual tea-drinking, with strawberries and cream, at a real country-seat, was not to be despised. There was a very handsome place about a mile from the village, which had lately been taken by an old friend of my mother's, who, on moving from the city, was considerably shocked and discouraged by the many inconveniences attending a residence in the country.

Mrs. Morfield, when she had time, was a very enter-

taining woman, and always had a great deal to say to my mother, and not much in particular to me ; but she had repeatedly pressed me in a very kind manner to come and take tea with her sociably ; and having never before availed myself of this invitation, I had now concluded to go. Mrs. Morfield's good qualities, however, were considerably enhanced in my estimation by the knowledge of her being the happy sister of a brother who had been quite a favorite with me in my younger days. It was now three years since Henry Auchinclass departed for college, and during that time I had never once seen him, but his name had been frequently brought forward with a grand flourish of trumpets, till my curiosity was quite excited to see if he had altered so much from what I remembered him. Once a fugitive piece of poetry fell into my hands, after passing through various channels, and having just begun to admire sentiment, this production of my old playmate's stirred up all my ecstasy and enthusiasm. Prizes were showered upon him at every examination, and in the eyes of his old acquaintances his brow was encircled with a wreath of laurel that raised him almost to a level with Shakspeare and Milton. This hero was now actually coming among us with all his honors fresh upon him ; whether he really had arrived, or was going to arrive that afternoon, I did not know, but thinking it extremely probable that, as the distance from Mr. Auchinclass was not far, he would visit his sister as soon as possible, I was seized with a sudden fancy to execute one of my long-promised tea-drinkings. At our last parting something of

a fracas took place ; but I was quite a juvenile then, not more than fourteen, and now, with the experience and improvement of three additional years, I *collected* all my energies to startle him with my fancied transformation.

There was a gentle tap at my door, and, her face quite radiant with excitement and anticipation, in walked (or rather bounded, for she never walked) my chosen colleague, Annie Wilmot. A small basket hung on her arm, a huge sun-bonnet almost concealed her pretty face, and she was evidently bound on a strawberry excursion.

"Come, quick !" she exclaimed, "put on your hat, snatch up a basket, and let us be off, for we shall have a grand time of it. The girls are all pretty lazy, and require considerable stirring up, but there is a whole caravan at the door now, waiting for the light of your presence. Come, Ella, you're a terrible snail ! do make haste !"

A strawberry excursion ! Dear me, what an idea ! my lip curled at the very thoughts of it. Soil and tear my white frock among the brambles, disarrange my carefully-smoothed ringlets, and stain my hands like any old strawberry-picker ! I, a young lady of seventeen, perform such an undignified part !

"I am sorry, Annie," I replied, "but you really must excuse me, in consequence of a prior engagement."

"*Prior engagement !*" repeated the laughing girl, mimicking my tone, as she eyed me from head to foot ; "I am afraid you will choke yourself with big words. Have you swallowed Webster, my dear ? But, really," she

continued, with a courtesy of mock reverence, "you must excuse my not being struck with your resplendent appearance before. Pray, if I may be so bold as to ask, what do all these curls mean, and that cross, and that particularly unrumpled-looking dress? Do initiate me as to this prior engagement."

"I am only going out to tea," I replied, a little confused, while I determined not to tell her where, for fear of her suspecting me. "But I really think," said I, "that we are too old to go a-strawberrying, Annie. Remember that we are no longer children."

"Mercy on us! what has got into the girl? *Too old to go a-strawberrying!* If we are too old to *gather* strawberries," said she, "we must be too old to *eat* them; so I advise you to give them up at once. Farewell, Miss Propriety! I shall certainly send you a cap and a pair of spectacles suited to your advanced years. Wherever you are going," she concluded, "I hope you will enjoy yourself as much as we expect to; but I very much doubt it."

"So much you know," thought I; and away bounded my merry visitor, probably to enlighten the waiting bevy as to the nature of my objections, for I soon heard a great deal of buzzing and laughter as the whole troop finally disappeared.

My toilet had received its last finishing touch; I screened my face with a large sun-bonnet, and taking my parasol for further protection, sallied forth. I entered upon my journey in a very pleasant frame of mind. I was benevolently inclined that afternoon, and quite disposed to view

every thing in the best possible light ; but notwithstanding this happy temper, I became reluctantly convinced that that walk was one of the hottest and most disagreeable I had ever taken. The trees were few and far between, so that it was really fatiguing to get from one to the other, and scarcely a blade of grass refreshed the eye—nothing but barren, parched, discouraging-looking soil, whereon nothing ever could, would, or did grow. Resolved, however, not to be damped at the very outset, I toiled along, shut my eyes to keep out the sun, and tried to feel happy and contented with my mouth full of dust.

At length, to my great relief, I approached the house, and, worn and exhausted as I was, it burst upon me almost like a vision of Paradise—looking as cool and shady as possible in the midst of trees that appeared, at least, half a century old. I closed the heavy gate behind me, and walked leisurely up the graveled walk, quite charmed and enraptured with every thing I saw. Here and there was placed a handsome marble urn ; tubs of orange and lemon-trees lined the whole walk from the house ; and in the back-ground I perceived strawberry-beds, cherry-trees, and a large green-house. The steps leading to the front entrance were very broad, and with a light step I sprang up the whole flight, quite prepared for an afternoon of felicity. Those dark, solemn-looking trees—there was something sad in their very grandeur. A low melody played among the leaves as the summer wind wailed gently through them, and I stood watching and listening, fascinated by a strange power, until I almost forgot that I was to enter

the house. All appeared very still around, the blinds were closed, and the sound almost startled me as my hand touched the bell.

Some time elapsed before the ring was answered; I was obliged to give another, and another—and at length a slatternly-looking Irish girl made her appearance, who kept the door as closely shut as possible, and by placing her own substantial person in the aperture, effectually prevented my efforts at ingress. She appeared by no means to relish my intention of entering, and saying, in no gentle key: “And is it the misthress ye’d be wanting to see? She’s busy with the childer, and pr’aps will not lave them, but walk in a bit till I see.”

I followed my conductor, and entered an apartment on the first floor, which evidently answered the purpose of a dining-room, and was, without exception, as dismal-looking an apartment as I ever entered. The black, hair-cloth sofa was ornamented with slits in various places, from which the stuffing was peeping forth, an exploit of which the young Morfields were particularly proud; the chairs were in the same condition, the carpet was torn in various places, and the whole room had a very poverty-stricken appearance. On the mantle-piece were two large glass jars, covering pots of very unnatural-looking artificial flowers, considerably faded; over the sofa hung a picture of a sinking ship, and on one side a representation of Robinson Crusoe landed on the desert island. I felt irresistibly drawn toward that picture—it was dark, gloomy, and discouraging, and it sympathized with my own feel-

ings. My hopes, too, had suffered a complete wreck ; I entered upon the expedition with warm, glowing feelings, but the walk, the Irish woman, and the hopeless-looking apartment, had blasted them entirely ; and I was almost wishing myself with the strawberry-party, when the door opened, and Mrs. Morfield entered, with a very bold, staring baby in her arms.

She appeared delighted to see me, and welcomed me so cordially, that I quite forgot my recent dissatisfaction. She had one of the most sunny, joyful dispositions I have ever encountered ; she would have turned a desert island into sunshine, and laughed at every trouble that came in her way. Her temper must have been a happy one to stand the wear and tear of six noisy boys ; but although a delightful and entertaining companion, she would have been still more so had she not always been in a hurry. All she said was uttered so fast, that her auditors were in continual fear of her losing her breath ; and one carefully avoided lengthy replies with her, she always seemed so pressed for time.

"I am very glad," said she, with a merry laugh, "that you have come, for my own sake—and very sorry for yours, for both cook and nurse left me this morning in a fit of ill-temper ; and as I have only Kitty for a helper, I am afraid you will fare but poorly for your tea. However, I shall not make a stranger of you."

I hastened to assure her that it was not of the least consequence to me, for I thought to myself that with strawberries and cherries, a person need not care for any

thing else; and having succeeded in setting her mind at ease on that point, she proposed that we should leave our room for some other apartment. "Exactly like Kitty to put you here," said she, laughing, "but we will try if we can not find a pleasanter."

The baby, who behaved very much like a wooden machine, with the exception of staring and sucking its fingers, was again clasped in her arms, and we proceeded to the parlors. The blinds were shut closely and fastened to, and Mrs. Morfield, encumbered with the baby, tried in vain to open them. I gazed around, as well as I was able in the dark, and saw that the rooms were very large and handsomely furnished, having a cool appearance that was extremely pleasant. Very well satisfied with this prospect, I lent my assistance to unfasten the shutters; but in vain; they were obstinately determined not to open, and with a sigh I followed Mrs. Morfield into the hall.

"Come here," said she, as she threw open a door on the other side; "here is a room that will just suit you, Miss Ella. I believe you are a little romantic, and the prospect from these windows can not fail to please you."

It was a complete fairy bower; the floor was covered with a light straw matting; the pretty French bedstead had a canopy of thin white muslin, bordered with lace, with a corresponding cover on the little toilet-table; the chairs were of wood, prettily painted, and every thing looked as light, airy, and country-like as possible. I was in ecstasies with the whole arrangement, and on glancing from the window, I found that the prospect quite justified

Mrs. Morfield's praises. Directly beneath was the green, close-shaven lawn, studded with wide-spreading trees, across which a majestic peacock every now and then strutted in all the glory of beauty and splendor; while far away rose a dim, indistinct mist of blue waters and purple mountains.

Mrs. Morfield, having placed her marvelous baby on the floor—marvelous because it had been so quiet—seated herself in a low rocking-chair, and gave me the whole history of her morning's misfortunes. I was totally uninterested in the whole proceeding, but not being required to make any responses, I fixed my eyes on the scene without and listened patiently to the end. She then commenced a panegyric on the still piece of humanity that sat sucking its shoe, which was quite natural, considering that it was the only sister of six brothers. I even joined in these praises, for its not crying appeared to me remarkable; and I began to think that I had at length met with that often-described, but always invisible curiosity—a *good baby*! The young lady was lifted from the floor, and even bribed to sit on my lap, which surprised me still more, as babies always had an invincible repugnance to me, which I returned with interest, and no performance was more disagreeable to me than baby-talk. I quite sympathized with the old bachelor, who, having picked up a woman and baby on the road, took them into his wagon on condition that the mother refrained from talking nonsense to her child. This the lady readily promised; but forgetting at length the scruples of her companion, she

burst forth with: "Bless its little heart! so it should go ridy pidy in the cooche poochee—" "Get out of my wagon!" thundered the exasperated gentleman.

But the baby in question behaved remarkably well, and I really began to feel quite an attachment for it. It was no great beauty, certainly; and I did think I had seen heads that boasted more hair; but in its mother's eyes it was pre-eminently lovely, and as I wished to earn a character for amiability, I praised it up to the skies. Its eyes were round, and very staring, so I remarked on their unusual size, and Mrs. Morfield observed, complacently, that they were exactly like its father's—its forehead was high and broad, which, of course, was a mark of genius—and thus, with my own skill, and some promptings from the mother, I patched up quite a beauty out of materials which seemed to have been thrown together at random.

We had been chatting gayly for some time, and with the prospect from the window, the charming room, and the pleasant manners of Mrs. Morfield, to say nothing of what was yet in expectancy, I looked forward to a delightful afternoon, when my entertainer suddenly rose, and declaring she had quite forgotten Kitty, requested me to watch the child during her absence.

"You seem to be so fond of her," said she, "that I am going to make you head nurse for a little while; but all you will have to do is to see that she does not get into mischief. Just keep an eye upon her, will you?"

I smilingly consented to perform this slight service; and skillfully maneuvering her way without attracting

the child's attention, Mrs. Morfield closed the door behind her, and left me absorbed in a train of very pleasant fancies. I thought it very probable that she would ask me to make her a visit of a week at least; she must be so lonely, with no companions but those riotous boys—for her husband, having just become initiated into the mysteries of farming, spent his whole time out of doors, directing, arranging, and often hard at work himself. He was only visible at meal times, and I did wonder what had possessed his wife to marry him; he was so little of a companion; but she appeared quite satisfied with him, and looked upon all he did with admiring eyes. I intended, during my visit, to be the tenant of the pretty room in which I sat, and I pictured myself early in the morning throwing up the sash, and leaning out to catch the sweet air of summer as it played amid my hair, while a perfect burst of melody swept around from the birds, who always took up their station in those grand old trees; or at evening, when I wandered over the lawn, or rested, with a book in my hand, beneath one of those spreading oaks. Oh, it would be so delightful!

Here my attention was suddenly brought back to realities by a loud squeal which proceeded from the mouth of my forgotten charge. The young lady, having grown tired of amusing herself with an old shoe, glanced about for further employment, and not being at all pleased to see a stranger substituted for her mother, gave vent to her indignant feelings in a succession of particularly edifying screams. I was at first quite surprised, having been de-

luded into the belief that she was an excellent kind of a child, who would maintain almost the same position for a whole day at least. I did not suppose it necessary to feel the least responsibility concerning her; but I soon found that nothing was further from her intentions than to be neglected in this manner. Having a mortal aversion to strangers, the child crept rapidly toward the door, crying all the time, and it seemed almost impossible to pacify her. But at length I succeeded in placing her on my lap, where I tried very hard to convince her that the cross which I wore, and two or three rings, were the greatest curiosities that had refreshed her sight in a long time. For a little while she condescended to be duped by the lavish encomiums which I bestowed upon these articles; but soon recollecting that she had seen very much such things before, she broke forth anew. I then resorted to the very original amusement of shaking a thimble on a pair of scissors; but quite enraged at the idea of my attempting to quiet her in this manner, she screamed louder than ever, and I was obliged to surrender my poor curls to her savage grasp.

She even deigned to laugh and be quite amused with this employment for some time, especially when she saw my evident reluctance to be so tortured; but after a while I grew more accustomed to it, and endured her pulls with so much philosophy that she left off in high dudgeon. She then became quite interested in the excitement of scratching at me with her nails, and crying between spells; but finding this performance any thing but pleasant, I placed

her on the bed, and gave her a small box of tapers from the writing-table, which she opened and shut, and scattered about with evident satisfaction. Finding the young termagant so quietly disposed, I ventured to glide back to my window, and wondered what could keep Mrs. Morfield so long—not feeling exactly satisfied with this baby-tending. But then, as her sunny face rose up before me, all my anger vanished, and I felt quite sorry and concerned to think that she was probably busy in the kitchen with the awkward Kitty, in order to get a presentable tea for her visitor. The baby was now so quiet and well-behaved, that I almost regretted the hard thoughts I had entertained toward it; and in a more pleasant frame of mind, I took up the last number of “Graham,” which lay upon the table, and was soon deeply buried in its fascinating pages.

The quiet, however, was of short duration; I was startled by a noise of something falling, and on glancing at the bed, it was empty! In horror and despair I sprang to the other side, and there lay my young torment, quite purple in the face, with the tapers scattered around, and one of the large, ruffled pillows under her. I fully expected to be imprisoned and tried for murder, and, hesitating to have my fears confirmed, I caught up the child to see if it still breathed. My touch immediately restored life and animation; having fortunately fallen with the pillow under her, she had not been hurt in the least—but, extremely frightened and angry at her unceremonious descent, she held her breath for some time with passion (an exploit in which good babies are very apt to indulge), but she now

sent forth screams that were absolute music in my ears, as they assured me beyond a doubt that my tormentor was still in the land of the living. The tapers were bitten quite flat in various places, and several had disappeared—whether down her throat or not, I could not tell; but I gathered up the remainder, and devoted myself to the task of quieting the child.

I was now fairly in for it; I reasoned with myself a short time, and became convinced that the fault must be entirely my own—I was the one to blame, for its own mother had praised it as an excellent baby, and she surely ought to know—my bad management was the sole cause of its present behavior. My ambition was concerned to restore its good humor; Mrs. Morfield would be far better pleased to be relieved from the trouble of tending it, and animated with new energy, I seized it in my arms, and began dancing wildly around the room. The young lady regarded me with a look of approval, and sucked her fingers in quiet content. It was very solid, and appeared to me the heaviest baby I had ever carried; still I toiled on as long as I was able; but the moment I sunk into a seat, she began to scream, and, as I had at length found the means of quieting her, I endeavored to keep up for a short time longer, hoping every moment that Mrs. Morfield would enter the door and relieve me. I wondered that she did not hear the child cry; it seemed as though such screams must pierce the thickest wall; but the time passed on, and I was still imprisoned with my tormenting charge. At length I was obliged to give up—I really

could not lug her around any longer; and sinking down in a kind of despair, I was entertained with an interminable fit of crying.

In the midst of this ebullition, I happened to look out upon the lawn, and seeing a peacock pass leisurely along, I resolved to turn it to some account. Resting my heavy burden on one arm, with the other I pointed out the bird, knocked on the glass to it, talking as much nonsense in the mean time as I had ever heard in my whole life. The young lady was highly delighted—she stopped crying, and gazed with rapture on the brilliant color of the feathers. But at last the peacock grew tired of spreading out his tail, and walked slowly away, to my great annoyance, and also to that of my charge—who, finding that no more was to be seen, resumed her customary music. If ever a full sense of the beautiful dawned upon me, it was at the sight of a black hen and a brood of little chickens, who very obligingly supplied the absence of the peacock, and quarreled over some crumbs which had been thrown beneath the window. The child appeared to be fascinated by any thing that had the power of life; on the disappearance of the hen and chickens, she transferred her raptures to a grave-looking cat; and I even hailed with delight the appearance of a grasshopper, if he took a pretty high spring.

But at last every thing was gone; there seemed to be a strange perverseness among the live stock that afternoon; not a peacock refreshed my sight, not a chicken could I spy, not even a grasshopper beamed upon my eagerly-

strained vision; and evidently regarding me as the cause, the child screamed furiously, and struggled to escape from my hold. Oh, how my poor arm did ache with tending that little termagant! I was hot and exhausted with my efforts to amuse her—the afternoon was now rapidly passing away, and as yet I had tasted none of my expected felicity. The child was screaming; I sat quite listless and passive in a large easy chair, regarding my burden with a look of hopeless weariness, and wondered if this could possibly be the excellent baby who had only wanted an eye kept upon it. An eye, indeed! Eyes, arms, tongue, feet, breath, every thing had been spent in vain; and now, in a state of desperation, I resolved to be freed from my odious bondage, and flung wide open the door leading into the hall, that Mrs. Morfield might reap the full benefit of her child's inexhaustible lungs.

This maneuver answered the expected end; my hostess soon made her appearance with a troubled look, and relieving me of the torment, she clasped it fondly in her arms, saying, in a soothing voice:

"Did they leave it, darling? No, they shouldn't plague my baby, no they shouldn't—mother's own pet! Ah, oh, you naughty girl!" with a pretended slap, "I'll teach you to plague my darling!"

The young lady, having satisfied herself that I was undergoing proper correction for my misdemeanors, condescended to be pacified, and surveyed me with an aspect of great complacency. Quite wearied out with her superhuman exertions, she soon fell asleep; and having deposited

her on the bed, Mrs. Morfield expressed her wonder at the child's behavior.

"It is quite surprising," she continued, "she is generally so good and so little trouble—I begin to think, Ella, that you can not be very well versed in the accomplishment of nursing."

I was quite provoked at this insinuation, after all the pains I had taken, and replied with some warmth, that, good or bad, such a child was enough to provoke the patience of Job.

"Oh, stop! stop!" said she, pleasantly. "It is easy to see that you are cut out for an old maid."

Well, if this really was not too much! wasn't it, now? To be sure, old maids are very nice people—I would speak of the community with all due respect; but still, no girl of seventeen likes to be threatened with a life of single blessedness, because she can not regard with much affection a cross, troublesome baby, who has teased and tormented her a whole afternoon. I was too full to speak, and Mrs. Morfield regarded me with considerable amusement; but swallowing my irritated feelings as I could, I complied with her invitation to walk out to tea. I fear that I regarded the table with a blank look of astonishment, for not a sign of fruit could I discover; and Mrs. Morfield apologized for the omission by saying that she had no one to gather it. I had quite forgotten that fruit did not drop into dishes of its own accord; and in no very amiable mood I sat down to a supper of flannel-cakes, which I soon found had been very appropriately named.

Mr. Morfield now made his appearance, and took his seat without a coat; the table being further embellished with the six young Morfields, who had been sent out with their father. Mr. Morfield liked every thing countrified, and in accordance with this prejudice, the eating utensils consisted of large, buck-handled knives and forks, which, after my fatigue, I could scarcely hold; and my hand trembled so in lifting my cup, that I narrowly escaped spilling the whole contents. I never worked so hard in my life as I had then; I felt completely reduced and enervated, and could scarcely move my arms.

"It is rather strange," said Mrs. Morfield, "that Henry has not been here—he was to have come to-night, was he not, father?" Mr. Morfield nodded assent, being busily engaged with the flannel-cakes, and she continued—"It is really too bad, Miss Ella, to have no beau to offer you—but have patience, and perhaps the truant will come yet."

After tea I concluded to reconnoiter the garden; but there was not much pleasure, after all, in wandering off alone; Mrs. Morfield being engaged with the baby, who was now wide awake, and Mr. Morfield occupied in some distant part of the ground. Then, too, the view of ripe fruit staring one right in the face with such an impudent kind of an air, as if it knew that I could not get at it, was any thing but agreeable; I thought of the baskets I had intended to bring to carry home all my spoils, and turned aside in extreme irritation. I looked up and down the road, but the tardy collegian was not to be seen; and with no very high opinion of "a social tea-drinking," I

returned to the house. We passed a tedious evening, and at length, quite tired out, I announced my intention of going home. With Mr. Morfield for an escort, I again traversed the weary road, forcibly impressed with the difference between romance and reality.

Oh, how they did laugh at me! as, bursting into tears, I recounted all my toils and troubles; the idea of going out sociably to tea, and tending baby for an afternoon's amusement, drew forth bursts of merriment, that grated on my ears as if in mockery of my overthrown expectations. But I seemed to dwell more particularly on Mrs. Morfield's disagreeable prophecy than the unsatisfactoriness of the visit, and their laughter redoubled when, after representing in glowing colors my toiling efforts to gain the name of a good nurse, I told of my dismay at finding myself branded with such an epithet. This appeared to strike them as the most ridiculous part, and I sat in sullen silence while they gave vent to their amusement. "So much for sympathy," thought I.

For myself, I was thoroughly disgusted with "not being made a stranger of;" but my mortification was complete, when, the next morning, Anne, looking over the fence which joined ours, exclaimed—

"You can not tell what a delightful strawberrying we had. None of us returned with empty baskets, which you know has sometimes been the case; and we not only found strawberries, but, would you believe it, picked up a real, actual *beau*! Now, guess who it was—some one you have not seen in a long time?"

I *did* guess, but remaining silent, my companion continued—


“Why, we were actually discovered by the college-poet, Henry Auchinclass, just returned to be lionized and spoiled—who came upon us rather suddenly as we were making somewhat of a noise for well-behaved young ladies, and insisted upon helping us. What a merry time we had! He told us so many funny stories, and then we all concluded to take a walk off to the mill-pond; and I believe we stayed almost as late as you did. Now, where were you?”

Where, indeed! Oh, that I had gone with the strawberry-party! Anne communicated many more particulars, and then, unperching herself from the fence, ran into the house, while I, in quite a brown study, followed her example. That very afternoon I beheld the object of this commotion, but with that one glance vanished all my disappointed feelings—for *he had a cigar in his mouth!* Sentiment, vanity, castle-building, all ended in smoke. I had always despised tobacco-snuffers, tobacco-chewers, and tobacco-smokers; that one cigar brought down my hero from the pedestal whereon I had placed him, and again I “roamed in maiden meditation, fancy free.”

By-the-by, Mrs. Morfield never did ask me to make her a visit—she would doubtless require a better baby-tender; and ever since I have had an unconquerable aversion to taking tea sociably.



HOW TO GET RID OF AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

 VERY pretty village was the village of S——; and one, too, that boasted something more than the usual allowance of one church and two rival store-keepers, with the minister's wife and doctor's wife for aristocracy, and the *great house*, to afford a never-ending subject of wonder and admiration to the inhabitants. Not at all; it was quite a collection of pretty villas, whose owners went to town at least twice a week in their own conveyances—and were, therefore, quite *au fait* upon the subject of fashions. Indeed, they were as well-dressed a community as you would meet any where; and prided themselves particularly upon knowing just how every thing should be done.

It was to this aristocratic little nook that Walter Evartson, the young lawyer, conveyed his bride soon after their marriage. He had settled there sometime before, an entire stranger, but his prepossessing appearance and agreeable manners soon won both friends and clients; and the great ones of S—— patronized him with the most enchanting condescension. He was feted, and flattered, and followed, until he threw off all claims to their courtesy by

committing the unpardonable crime of marriage. But worse than all, he did not even select some fair resident of the village of S——; but after a short absence, returned accompanied by a young lady, whose appearance, manners, etc., underwent the severest criticism.

But do what they would, they could not deny that she was very pretty, very tastefully dressed, and very much of a lady; having, besides, a certain independent kind of an air, which led them to suspect that she did not value their opinions quite as highly as they could have wished. However, they could not alter this; and Mrs. A. having sailed majestically in, Mrs. B. followed her example; and finally all S—— had been there, with the avowed purpose of making the new-comer feel at home, but in reality to see how she looked.

The young lawyer's means were limited, and their style of living a very unpretending one. A pretty cottage fronting the road, to which was attached a fine large garden with plenty of fruit, was their residence; and Emily considered one servant quite sufficient for two people. This was her first attempt at housekeeping; and she found it very pleasant to gather strawberries, arrange the knick-nacks in the parlor, and manufacture cakes and pies by way of housework; and then take up an interesting book, or some pretty piece of needle-work to while away the hours until Walter's return. Then the man of business was transformed, for a time, into quite a romantic sort of youth—fumbling among dusty parchments did not appear to deaden his imagination in the least; and sometimes the

two would wander off to the arbor at the end of the garden—and, sad to relate, oh, ye wise ones! they would waste their time in reading Moore or Byron, when Emily might have been so much better employed in mending stockings, or making bread. Dreadful, isn't it?

But the worst is yet to come; they would even stroll into the woods after wild flowers, these two great, grown-up babies, and wreath them in Emily's hair, and do all sorts of foolish things. But if you had been with them you would have thought that a nightingale had perched itself on a tree overhead, daytime and all, for such strains of sweet, clear, gushing music issued from those rosy lips, as none but a nightingale *could* send forth.

Well, foolish as it may appear to those who have got over love and "all that sort of nonsense," they enjoyed it very much; but before long a change came over the spirit of their dream. Not that their love was in the least changed—oh, no, it was not that; but romance is often driven from the field by reality and common-place. Who was the author of this mischief? No one would have thought it, to be sure, but the pivot upon which the whole turned was the faithlessness of the Irish girl, who had been installed as queen of the kitchen. Whether a yearning toward "ould Irelandt," or an exciting letter from a lover just come over, or some involuntary outrage to her dignity perpetrated by the youthful mistress, prompted the step, as Eunice Rookley says, "we are not to know." But this much we do know, that one pleasant June morning Miss Biddy stood at the kitchen door, grasping her bundle of

worldly goods with a very resolute air, while Emily's pretty face bore the traces of vexation and dismay.

Walter sat very comfortably reading his paper in the breakfast parlor; while through the open window came the delightful melody of birds, and the perfume of flowers still wet with the morning dew. He heard the light step approaching, and looked up to welcome her with a beaming smile; but to his surprise and dismay she burst into tears. He had never seen Emily before having what the children call "a good cry," and hastily throwing down his paper, he devoted himself to the task of soothing her. At length she soon began to smile at Walter's representations and ridiculous contrivances; but then, as she glanced at those small, helpless-looking hands, she heaved a desponding sigh.

"But we shall have no breakfast to-day, at this rate," said Emily, suddenly; "Bridget has not even made a fire to boil the kettle."

"Do not trouble yourself in the least, my dear," replied Walter, with an air of supreme confidence in his own abilities. "That is very easily remedied. If you will set the table, I will engage to produce a fire."

So saying, he walked into the kitchen, while Emily was soon busily engaged with the cups and saucers. It was really amusing to see him; he looked so warm, and fussy, and responsible, and handled things so awkwardly, that he was constantly upsetting the whole paraphernalia of tongs, shovel, and poker. Emily now and then looked in to see how he came on, and once a suppressed "hang it!" reached

her ear; but as the kettle was not yet ready to hang, she concluded that she must have been mistaken.

"Emily."

She was at his side in a moment.

"Perhaps, love, you can assist me a little with this fire; the foundation of the thing is all right, you see it only wants a little alteration."

Do not think him stupid; he could have made a fire in any decent kitchen, but the chimney was a most unfortunately smoky one.

Emily smiled as she took the fire entirely apart, and arranged it in a more skillful manner; and at length, between them both, the kettle did something like boiling. Walter tried very hard to persuade himself that his cup of coffee was the best he had ever tasted, because he thought he had made it himself; he put in a little more cream, a little more sugar, and then a little more coffee; but do what he would, he could not help making very wry faces over it. As he raised his eyes he met Emily's, and the two burst out a laughing.

"It is no laughing matter," said Emily; "how is the work to get done?"

"Easily," replied Walter; "I can send you in at least a dozen servants before night."

"I think you will find yourself mistaken," said Emily; "servants are not so easily obtained in the country, and it was sometime before we could persuade Biddy to come with us."

"*Nous verrons*," replied her husband, gayly, as he rose

to go to his office. A recollection of the morning's banquet came over him suddenly, and he put his head in at the door with, "You had better not attempt any thing very difficult for dinner, my dear, because you won't have me here to help, you know."

"Away with you, you quintessence of conceit," said Emily, laughing; "and as to the dinner, do not trouble yourself in the least, for I shall give you nothing but bread and strawberries."

There seemed to be no getting him off; first he came back for his gloves, and then he came back for a kiss; but at length the door finally closed upon him, and Emily went to her household affairs, singing merrily all the time. What did she care if Biddy had gone away? So she dusted and sang, until approaching the window, she peeped forth from the blind, just to see what was going on. As the stage-coach appeared in sight she could not help wishing that her mother, or one of those naughty sisters of hers, would make her appearance.

But as she stood looking, the vehicle suddenly drew up at the door, and it was very evident that *somebody* was coming. A straw hat and green vail, and a multitude of bows and smiles was all that Emily was able to distinguish; until, with a most loving embrace, the visitor exclaimed:

"I quite pitied you, Cousin Emily! I thought that you must be so lonely here in the country, and I came determined to make you a good, long visit. Ma and the girls have gone to Cape May, but I told them that I preferred enlivening your solitude."

Emily now recognized Martha Eastman, a very forward cousin of Walter's, to whom she had taken somewhat of a dislike during the short time she passed in her society just after their marriage; a feeling not at all diminished by this unceremonious visit. She murmured something in reply which was scarcely audible; but this did not in the least diminish the volubility of her visitor, who appeared to think that she was doing Cousin Emily a great favor. Now, if there is any thing provoking in this mortal world, it is to have a person whom you wish in your very heart at least a hundred miles off, trying to persuade you that she is conferring a favor upon you, by coming at the very time of all times when she is least wanted. Emily surveyed the liberal allowance of baggage with considerable interest, but resolved at the same time that the "good, long visit" should be a very short one.

The visitor was one of several daughters who had been brought up to make as much use of other people as possible. She was rather showy in appearance, with a brilliant complexion, and saucy-looking blue eyes, and a great idea of displaying these charms to the best advantage. It was not the least sympathy for Cousin Emily that had prompted her visit; she thought that a jaunt to the country might be pleasant, besides a desire to see how they lived.

Miss Eastman was one who could make her wants known; and after a while she coolly observed, "Come, Cousin Emily, do order dinner—I begin to feel the 'keen demands.'"

"There is no one to order but you and I," replied Emily, quietly; "my only servant left me this morning, and we must gather our dinner from the strawberry bed."

Miss Eastman looked, but Emily did not see her. She was coolly tying on her sun-bonnet; and the visitor resolving to make the best of it, broke out into ecstasies at the idea; it was the very thing she should have chosen—she had always so wanted to gather strawberries in the country!

It was a very warm day, and Emily did not find her visitor of much assistance; she soon grew tired of stooping, and amused herself by eating the strawberries from the basket. This was not at all profitable; and after a while Emily said, very coolly—

"You seem to be so fond of the employment, that I am going to leave you to it altogether. My husband will be home soon, and I have some things to attend to—but dinner will be ready by the time the basket is filled."

Miss Eastman now found it more politic to go to work in earnest; and in no very amiable mood she made her appearance at last with the strawberries. The little table was all ready; and the young housekeeper, in her cool-looking white dress, flitted about like a fairy, from one window to the other, watching for her husband's arrival. There he was! and she flew out to meet him; while Miss Eastman scarcely knew whether to stay where she was, or go forward.

Emily told him of her unexpected visitor, at which his

countenance assumed a blank look of surprise; for he did not remember ever to have given her even a general invitation to come and visit them—and that, of course, is no invitation at all.

“Very annoying,” said he, “that she should have taken this opportunity to come; what have you done with her all the morning?”

“Oh,” replied Emily, “she has been gathering strawberries, and I really found her of considerable assistance; besides, it saved me the trouble of entertaining her.”

“*Picking strawberries!*” repeated Walter; “what a strange thing! To set a guest at work immediately on her arrival!”

“Oh, no,” said Emily, innocently, “not at all; she is very fond of it, and said that it was perfectly charming. She almost went into ecstasies, and repeated several lines of poetry on the occasion, which I have forgotten.”

Walter recollected his cousin’s character perfectly, but he only smiled, and drew Emily into the house.

Miss Eastman was politely welcomed, various inquiries made after the family, and they all sat down to dinner. Walter pronounced this to be infinitely better than the breakfast; but he looked considerably mortified when Emily playfully inquired for the servants he had promised to send.

“I really could not help it,” said he, at last, “I have been so much engaged to-day—but they will come yet.”

Emily smiled incredulously, and Miss Eastman hoped in her very heart that the promise would be kept; for the

visit did not promise much pleasure without the acquisition of a servant.

Emily was suddenly seized with a fancy for making strawberry preserves, and after dinner they went out again to pick fruit; when Miss Eastman, to her great indignation, found herself left precisely as she had been in the morning. She was almost angry enough to hail the stage as it passed and return home; but still she could scarcely complain, for she had told Emily on her arrival that she should use no ceremony with cousins, and Emily had now made the very same observation on leaving her to herself. She had never worked so hard before; but she reflected that there must be an end to this, and if she found her so useful, Emily would, in common courtesy, invite her to prolong her visit. So she worked on industriously, despite the sun and heat; but with the conviction that love in a cottage, if you must do your own work, is not so very enchanting after all.

"It was quite a good idea, was it not?" said Emily, pleasantly, "to make sweetmeats, when I have you here to help me? Strange, though, that you should have happened to come in just at the right time—so much better, too, than if it had been a mere acquaintance, for, somehow, one can't, you know, use ceremony with cousins."

Miss Eastman bit her lips, and walked off to the window; but Emily soon claimed her services, and continued to keep her pretty well occupied. At last, however, tea came; and when that was cleared away there was no more to be done. The three seated themselves on

the piazza, and the music of Walter's flute broke beautifully on the stillness of the evening.

It was a lovely moonlight night, and Miss Eastman observed, with considerable interest, the figure of a gentleman in an opposite window, which a shaded light at the further end of the apartment rendered still more distinct. At length the figure moved, disappeared for a few moments, and then, issuing from the gate, bent its steps toward the cottage.

"Why, Irving, is that you?" exclaimed Walter, as his friend suddenly stood before him; "we have been so wrapt up in the sentimental that we scarcely perceived you. Dr. Irving, Miss Eastman."

A graceful bend of his handsome figure, while the young lady's cheek flushed with anticipated conquest. It must have been on *her* account that he came over—he had probably seen her alight from the stage; not taking it into consideration that he might be in the habit of visiting his friends almost every evening.

A few minutes' conversation convinced her that Dr. Irving was *more* than tolerable for a country village, and quite worth making a conquest of. She exerted all her powers of pleasing, and very agreeable she could be, too, when she chose, apparently with some success. When she retired that night, the day's work was almost forgotten.

The next morning early Miss Eastman happened to be standing at her window, while there stood the young doctor at his. He bowed politely, while she, half in confusion, withdrew; and walking down stairs, began to think that

it would be very pleasant to smell the flowers with the morning dew fresh upon them—decidedly inclining to the opinion that the greatest variety was to be found in front of the house. She wore a very becoming white morning-dress, and had carelessly tucked a few natural flowers in her hair ; being, moreover, perfectly aware that she was at this particular moment looking her very best. Of course, though, she was quite unconscious that some one had crossed the street, and equally unconscious that a gentleman stood beside her, until, raising her head suddenly, she said, with the prettiest start imaginable :

“ Why, Dr. Irving ! how you frightened me ! ”

He was sorry, of course, that his appearance had had that effect—complimented her upon her early rising—said something about the bloom of cheeks and roses—and then asked for his friend ; but Walter had gone to his office, and the young doctor soon followed his example.

It is quite surprising how very hot the sun became in five minutes after ; the cool of early morning had suddenly changed to the heat and glow of noonday, and Miss Eastman went in to seek Cousin Emily. Again that everlasting strawberry picking, and the visitor began to grow rather tired of her fare.

“ It is very rural and romantic, to be sure,” she observed, “ to live on fruit and milk ; but is your husband quite satisfied without meat ? ”

“ Quite so,” was Emily’s reply ; “ he cares nothing at all about it, and if he did, he would not be willing for me to have the trouble of cooking it.”

The case was hopeless, and Miss Eastman merely heaved a desponding sigh. The dinner that day consisted principally of a rice-pudding, her especial abomination—she hated rice in any shape or form—besides, she had helped to make it; and after picking out the raisins, and trifling a little with the substance, she made no further attempt toward dispatching it.

“You have lost your appetite, Martha,” observed her hostess, a little mischievously; “a very bad sign—you must have fallen in love.”

Miss Eastman was almost ready to break forth; it was too much to let Emily flatter herself with such a supposition; but still she deemed it prudent to remain silent.

Generally, in the morning they had a long chat together in Emily's room, or rather Miss Eastman talked a great deal, while Emily listened and sewed; the theme of her conversation being a certain cousin about her own age; who, from her representation, must have possessed as many bad qualities, concentrated in her own private self, as were ever separately scattered upon the wicked ones of the world. She was so proud and haughty, so unamiable and self-willed—and then, too, some foolish person had once called her the belle of the place, and she couldn't get over that; though she was sure that she (Miss Eastman) could see no beauty in such great staring black eyes, and such a tall figure—she never admired giantesses.

The truth of the matter was this: Celine Esserton was an object of great jealousy; she was an only daughter, while Martha Eastman rejoiced in a multitude of sisters—

Celine was something of an heiress in her own right—a beautiful, intelligent, accomplished girl, and proud, too, as she had a just right to be, but not the kind of pride implied by Martha Eastman. Hers was the pride that will not stoop to a mean action—that upholds the truth upon all occasions—that defends the absent, and brings forward the humble. She despised her cousin, and she took no pains to conceal it; she could not help it; she had seen her bitterness of mind, her selfishness and disregard of others, and the two were at open enmity. Their different ways of showing this feeling displayed at once the difference in their characters. Miss Eastman endeavored to impress every one with a conviction of the total unworthiness of Miss Esserton's character, while Celine disdained to mention her cousin's at all, as though even that lowered her.

Miss Eastman certainly displayed considerable talent and perseverance in the assiduity with which she endeavored to prejudice Cousin Emily against Celine Esserton; yet it must be confessed that every successive incident which she related to corroborate the designing artfulness of her cousin's character, only awakened in Emily a greater desire to see her, and judge for herself.

Walter had been so often teased about his promises to procure loads of servants at a moment's warning, that he became quite desperate, and taking a wagon, drove about the country on a voyage of discovery. The result was quite satisfactory to himself; and one warm afternoon, when Emily sat reading in one of the front windows,

while her visitor occupied the other, a vehicle suddenly drove up to the door, from which her husband, looking very warm and tired, quickly descended ; and then watched the progress of three ladies, who alighted from the wagon after fashions peculiar to themselves. Emily looked, and wondered, and laughed ; but Miss Eastman saw in their awkward movements the most enchanting grace, and read in their vacant countenances an impress of all that was delightful. There was certainly cook, chambermaid, and waiter ; and she should now cease to be maid of all work.

Their various ways of leaving the wagon displayed their characters at once ; the first, rather an oldish woman, came down so very moderately and carefully, that it seemed doubtful if she ever reached terra firma—the second, a stout, pert, good-natured-looking thing, came tumbling out head-foremost, and became entangled among the wheels—while the third, with an utter absence of all expression in her face, after being at length made to understand that she *was* to get out, put her feet everywhere but in the right place, and finally effected a difficult descent over the back of the wagon. The first was a snail—she fairly crawled into the house ; the second, one of those bangers who break every thing they lay hands on, and always have a convincing argument at their tongues' end ; and the third, a wooden machine, endowed with the powers of motion, and the faculties of eating, drinking, and sleeping. From this delectable company Emily was expected to select a suitable kitchen goddess ; and having

sent them within, she followed, to examine their qualifications.

Miss Eastman accompanied her, for she felt a personal interest in the transaction ; and observing that Emily appeared rather indifferent about the matter, she exerted as much eloquence as was ever put forth by a candidate for the public votes, to convince her that all three were perfect miracles in their different departments. The oldish woman was so steady and respectable—one whom she could trust ; the stout girl was so bright and quick—an excellent hand in an emergency ; and the stupid girl was one who would, no doubt, do exactly as she was bid. All this, however, was whispered in an under tone during various walkings back and forth ; and the three candidates were, therefore, quite unconscious of the admiration they excited.

Emily's choice, however, was soon made ; the stupid one was out of the question—the stout girl informed her with an air, that “she was not very healthy, and had concluded to live out a short time in some nice, sociable family, where she could enjoy herself,” which immediately settled *her* claims—and the oldish woman was, therefore, installed in the office. She sighed deeply as she went for a pail of water, which occupied her about half an hour ; groaned as she stirred up the fire, and almost sobbed on being told to get some wood.

Emily saw that she was an oddity, and with difficulty refrained from smiling outright at Miss Eastman's endeavors to praise her up. The house was the largest she had

ever seen, the fire the hardest to make, and, "bad luck to the well, what a time it took her to draw the water!" She could scarcely understand any thing she was told, although, Irish-like, never willing to admit herself ignorant; and Walter, very much amused with her, one day related a spurious anecdote to some visitors, that happened to reach her indignant ears—which, by-the-by, were not where they ought to have been. Walter would now and then tell very queer stories; and the very day after her arrival he related that, having been told to cook something in the spider, she made her appearance after a while with a great daddy-long-legs, and inquired, very innocently:

"Would that do yer, ma'am? Sure, and a spider is not to be found in the place for love nor money."

She gave warning immediately, and Miss Eastman watched her retreating figure with melancholy feelings. Walter should not have done so, certainly; but Emily did not scold him; she only laughed, for it had rid her of one trouble, and she did not know but it might of another before long.

The strawberry-picking was again resumed, and Emily began to make bread, and puddings, and all sorts of things, always assisted, of course, by Miss Eastman, "for one couldn't use ceremony with cousins." The visitor began to ask herself if there were not more chance of felicity at home just now; but Dr. Irving had been there two or three times, and she resolved upon a scheme for taking his heart by storm at once.

She had a slight, graceful figure, and knew that she

looked her very best on horseback; but she was almost ignorant of the equestrian art; being a great coward, she had always been afraid to venture. She had, however, brought her riding-habit with her, and a cap with plumes, in which she considered herself quite irresistible; and after some trouble a horse was procured, although Walter had expressed his regret that he was unable to accompany her. That she did not mind in the least; she had become very courageous; but, notwithstanding, she trembled violently on being lifted into the saddle, and still more when the man who brought it observed that the horse was a very tricky one; though what sort of tricks he patronized was not exactly specified.

Emily, almost frightened on her account, advised her not to go; but Miss Eastman was determined, and Walter whispered, in a significant tone, "It won't hurt her."

Martha Eastman had a purpose to effect, which the alleged viciousness of the horse rather helped than hindered. She had observed that every morning Dr. Irving went in one particular direction to visit patients, always returning about the same time. Her idea was to meet him on his return; and if the horse should conclude to perform any of his antics just then, placing her in imminent danger, how very interesting she should appear!

Martha Eastman was a coward, and yet she nodded gayly to the others as she set forth on her journey; the horse, so far, behaving most respectably. He was not at all inclined to run away; on the contrary, he went rather slowly; and, anxious to make her best appearance, she

gave him a smart cut with the riding-whip to quicken his pace. His horseship stood perfectly still; all fears of being runaway with, or thrown off, were now forgotten; and another and another lash followed, but with no success. He quietly began eating the leaves of a willow tree just over where they stood—now and then turning his eye toward his fair burden with a glance which seemed to say, “Oh, you are there, are you?”

The young lady's distress was unspeakable; she had prepared herself for being runaway with—for being thrown into some field, to be taken up, perhaps, with a broken arm; she had brought herself to bear with fortitude the idea of almost any mishap that could possibly befall her, but she was not prepared for being stood still with! Just then happening to spy a ragged little boy, she enlisted him in her service; and after pushing the horse behind, and pulling him before, and slapping him between spells, he was at length set a-going, and the boy disappeared.

He went on very well for a short time; but before long he came again to a stand still, and Miss Eastman now saw the doctor approaching. He passed with a graceful bow, while the lady's cheeks burned painfully with the hue of mortification. He passed on, but she still sat there; and happening to turn his head a moment after, he was surprised to see her still stationary where he had left her. He looked again; and observing that she seemed to be urging her horse on, common politeness prompted him to turn back and offer his assistance. A smile would curl his

lip involuntarily, he could not help it; and Miss Eastman observed it. Ridicule, it is said, puts an end to love; and she became reluctantly aware that her prospects were very much dimmed.

It was very evident that the horse had no intention whatever of either returning home, or going forward; and having tied him to a tree, the young doctor assisted Miss Eastman into his gig, and she found herself driving back with feelings which she had little anticipated. Emily, too, was very much surprised at her visitor's appearance; but on being informed of the catastrophe she was unable to restrain her laughter. Poor Martha! she hurried up to her own room, dashed down the hateful riding cap, and throwing herself on the bed, indulged in a good cry.

When she came down, she announced her intention of returning home the next day, and Emily could not with any truth express her regret. She merely said—

“I am going to have another visitor to-night.”

“Are you?” replied Miss Eastman, in surprise, “Who is it?”

“Some one you have seen before,” said Emily, with an arch look of secrecy. “But I will not tell you until she comes.”

She? It was a she, then? But still Martha wondered who it could be, and watched the arrival of the stage with considerable interest. Surely she knew that figure! that graceful, yet commanding step! The vail was lifted—it was—it must be Celine Esserton!

Both started suddenly; but Celine's beautiful lip showed

the slightest tendency toward a curl, while Miss Eastman's face was suddenly overspread with a crimson hue. The morning's stage conveyed her and her baggage back to town; and Emily was not again troubled with her visits, while the whole family respected Cousin Emily very much when they found that she was not to be imposed upon. It was strange, certainly, but just after Miss Eastman announced her intention of going, a very nice servant made her appearance, and there she has been ever since.

But now about Celine. Emily had told her husband of Martha Eastman's representations, and inquired if the young lady were such a master-piece of art and dissimulation; which Walter indignantly denied, and spoke of his pretty cousin in such glowing terms, that Emily wrote and invited her there as soon as her household difficulties were settled.

The two were chatting pleasantly together, when Emily spoke of Dr. Irving.

"Dr. Irving?" repeated her companion, "Horace Irving do you mean?"

"The very same," replied Emily. "Are you acquainted with him?"

A warm blush lit up Celine's beautiful face, and this was answer enough. Emily had heard of his engagement, and mischievously withheld it from Miss Eastman, but she was entirely unacquainted with the name of the lady, and she now experienced a very pleasant surprise.

That very evening the two had quite an interesting

scene by themselves on the moonlit piazza—Walter and Emily preferring the parlor.

Before long the good people of S—— had another bride to comment upon, and Emily a delightful neighbor and companion.

AN AUTHOR'S VICISSITUDES.

SOMETIME since I went to spend the day with a friend, and on my arrival I found her surrounded with old letters and papers, which she was busily perusing; and some of them appeared to afford her so much amusement that I begged to be favored with a glimpse of their contents.

Her laughing face grew more merry as she replied, "It is a long story, I can assure you; but I have a great mind to give you the whole history—for I wish to earn a character for amiability, by showing the extreme good-nature with which I can bear to be laughed at. Perhaps you are already aware of the surprising fact, or do I now inform you for the first time, that you are actually face to face with one who has 'been in print?'—*a real authoress*—not a mere imaginary shadow, but substantial flesh and blood!"

I looked at her for a moment, in order to detect the joke which I suspected to be lying *perdu* amid this waste of words; for, of all people in the world, she was the last one whom I should suspect of having such a page in her

history. Perhaps I had formed an erroneous idea of authoresses, but certainly, Mrs. Wendinghall, with her beaming face, and wild, reckless spirits, was as different as possible from my ideal portrait of a blue-stockings. She was exceedingly brilliant in conversation, and one could not glance at her speaking face without reading the talent that was unmistakably written there; but I never could have fancied her, pen in hand, actually writing something for the express purpose of having it printed. But I was most eager for the denouement of the mystery, and after another burst of laughter, my friend thus began:

"Yes, I have really been an authoress, or scribbler, or whatever you please to call it; and this morning, while rummaging an old desk, I happened to come across some of my effusions, which brought those days up vividly before me. You seem to have happened-in just at the right time to become the confidant of my various adventures and mishaps in the tangled paths of literature; for no one has been so far honored by me before. To begin, then, at the beginning; ever since I can recollect any thing, I remember being a sort of wonder, on account of my supposed talents and precocity. Aunts and grandmothers, and all who visited the family, were surprised at my powers of memory, which I think myself were somewhat wonderful; and whenever I received a present of a book, the donor was rewarded on his or her next visit by hearing me repeat it word for word, until I fairly stopped for want of breath—a circumstance, perhaps, which led them next time to bring their present in some other form. At school

I was no less of a prodigy. My lessons were always repeated to the letter, and I shone there as a bright, pre-eminent star; while in reality I think I was much nearer a dunce, for I often recited correctly what I tried in vain to understand. We were always learning Ancient History; and at home I bored people with endless accounts of the Spartans and Athenians, while with respect to our own country, I could scarcely tell whether we beat the English or they us.

“At a very early age I began to poetize; and these productions were always heard with the kindest absence of all criticism, and praised up to the skies. I had a sort of rhyming facility, but not the least ear for poetry; and all my effusions were carefully copied into a blank-book, which was constantly brought out for the edification of visitors. Now-a-days, when bored to death by an exhibition of some uncommonly promising child's talents, that blank-book often rises up before me, like an accusing spirit, and calls for a fresh supply of patience. All acknowledged me to be a genius of the most surprising order, and prophesied that I would, one of these days, astonish the world with a book the like of which had never beamed upon them before. It would, indeed, have been a curious medley if I had written it.

“But in order to counteract the pernicious effect of so much incense, my vanity often received a painful check from my mother's good sense. She did not agree with the rest in considering me a wonder, and thought my so-called poetry a useless waste of time. She feared that I

would be entirely spoiled for all rational reading or pursuits, and seldom praised my attempts in verse. A stubborn matter-of-fact sort of uncle, too, once mortified me most sensibly. I had written him a letter all in rhyme, in my very best vein, in which I compared him to all the combined deities who were models of wisdom, majesty, and virtue—thinking it probable that he, in return, would present me with an elegantly bound set of Scott's poems. Instead of the expected gift, however, I received for an answer :

“MY DEAR NIECE,—I can not say that I feel much flattered by your likening me to all sorts of heathen deities ; but I suppose you meant it kindly, and I must take it as a compliment. I beg, however, to resign all claim to Minerva, as she happened to be a woman, unless, indeed, you refer to her assumption of the form masculine, when, as Mentor, she guided Telemachus safely through his troubles, and in that character I am willing to act, and give you a little wholesome advice, which is this : do not spend too much time in writing poetry, for it is apt to make us romantic, and spoil our tastes for all that is useful and substantial.’

“In the first transport of wounded vanity I dashed the hateful letter from me, and burst into a passion of tears. But I determined to triumph over Uncle John—I determined that he, too, should recognize the talent that charmed all ears. So to the very top of the house, the author's acknowledged province, did I adjourn. I busied myself for a day or two, with a very mysterious air, in removing

books and papers to the room selected by me as a suitable spot for the flights of genius; and having arranged things to my satisfaction, I locked myself up from the world, and endeavored to produce something that should take them all by storm. It was summer, and I sat burning and melting on my perch at the top of the house; but alas! the hot sunbeams failed to pierce any crack in my cranium, through which could ooze forth some of the inspiration which I felt confident was stowed away there. No production came up to the elevated standard by which I could judge of their worthiness for the press; and I began to think that Uncle John might be half right, after all.

"But '*nil desperandum*' was my motto; and perhaps, too, my courage was partly kept up by the delightful mystery attached to my seclusion. People wondered what I could be doing up in my garret, and threw out so many hints of a determination to investigate the premises, that, quite concerned for my manuscripts, I locked the door, and carried the key with me every time that I descended from my elysium. I might have calmed my fears with the reflection that 'naught is never in danger,' but a young, unfledged scribbler, could not be expected to sit in very severe judgment upon her own productions. So I wasted paper at a terrible rate, and made the much-injured English language play all sorts of undignified antics; while I burned and froze alternately in my mistaken devotion to the muses.

"But as the genius of poetry seemed to have taken his flight, I turned my attention to prose. 'Who knows,'

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thought I, 'but I may yet earn a reputation worthy even of me, by descending a step or two in my aspirations?' So with renewed hopes I again took up the quill, and applied myself most perseveringly to my task. Having read that Dickens, and Sue, and other great writers, were in the habit of taking solitary walks about the metropolis, and visiting the prisons, and other resorts of infamy, in quest of subjects, I, too, started off on solitary expeditions in the suburbs of the city—hoping that the genius of inspiration might chance to fold his wings amid some of the hovels which had now assumed so attractive an appearance. I even ventured to enter these domicils once or twice, in hopes that by manifesting a degree of kind interest I might draw forth the conversational powers of the inmates, and perhaps meet with some touching story of love or injury that would furnish the foundation of a three volume novel. But much as has been said and sung of marvelous events developed in the habitations of the poor and ignorant, I never met with any thing the least romantic, and always found that the manners and sentiments of the occupants corresponded exactly with their dress and position. But my secret rambles in these out-of-the-way places was soon put a stop to; for having been discovered in a rather disreputable region, I was expressly forbidden to stir hither again.

"At length, however, my hopes and wishes were realized; I had completed a sort of *nouvelle*, after the most approved fashion of love-stories, and having carefully revised and corrected every page, I burned with impa-

tience to let the world know what I had produced. So, having persuaded mamma into the back parlor one day after dinner, I begged permission to read my manuscript. The room was cool and shaded, and I thought that there we should be free from all interruption. My mother, to be sure, never was particularly demonstrative in her love; and I had often regretted that she never followed the example of mothers in novels, by 'catching me to her bosom,' or 'mingling her tears with mine;' but human nature, I thought, could not resist this appeal both to love and ambition, and, quite prepared for the most extravagant expressions of emotion and astonishment, I complacently unfolded my sheets. My mother had settled herself in an attitude of forced attention, and with a trembling voice I read the title. I forget now what it was, but I detected a faint, half-suppressed smile that hovered about my mother's mouth; and I thought to myself, 'Never mind, it will assert its own claims before long.' I plunged into the story, and arranged my heroes and heroines upon the stage. The plot proceeded admirably; and, completely carried away with the supposed excellence of my own composition, I followed its development in a state of enthusiasm; and while reading the most affecting passages, the tears came into my eyes and threatened to roll down my cheeks. But remembering that it would look rather foolish to cry over my own story, I managed to keep them back. My auditor neither moved nor spoke; and encouraged by her rapt attention, I finished the story with tolerable composure. I was not folded in any

sudden embrace—I felt no warm tears falling on my face—I looked at my mother—she was fast asleep!

“Poor, dear mamma! It was a warm day, and the monotonous sound had lulled her into a pleasant slumber; as she sat there, with her soft, brown curls resting against the back of the chair, and her broad, white forehead and drooping eyelids looking so pure and fair, her air of meek helplessness almost soothed my angry thoughts. You laugh at it—and so can I now; but I assure you it was a most cruel blow then, and scarcely any thing ever excited me so much as that quiet figure of my sleeping mother. Sleep is ‘death’s beautiful brother;’ and in the midst of my tumultuous feelings, a thought of the sleep that knows no waking came into my mind—and not daring to feel angry with the quiet placidity of those chiseled features, I flew to my study, and wept showers of tears at the indignity offered to the beloved creation of my genius. I felt almost as much affection for it as a mother does for her first-born child; I had toiled over it for days, weary and uncomfortable—and this was my reward.

“Mamma has a spice of sarcasm in her composition, too; and when I afterward entreated her almost passionately to say *something* in its favor, she remarked that ‘*it was very soothing!*’”

“But do not think, my dear friend, that all my emotions were for this evanescent bubble of fame which had danced before my eyes; because if you do, you will be very much mistaken; my regrets were quite as much for

the fortune that seemed to have receded from my grasp. I fear that I could not have had the true inspiration within me to think of mercenary considerations; but with respect to mamma and Uncle John, I feared that their eyes would not be opened to the merits of any production of mine, unless I could show that I had received for it something more substantial than compliments; and then, besides, although our means were such as quite to preclude the necessity of writing for a living, even the wealthiest people will scarcely have money in such abundance that more would not be acceptable—especially if obtained in such a very easy manner as this appeared to me; and I intended with my first earnings to purchase a heavy diamond ring for mamma, that should be cherished by her as a gift from me. Oh, mother! even now I can not help exclaiming, how could you go to sleep!

“ Well, I retired, as I said, to my study; and after my usual solace of crying, the soothings of vanity came to my aid, and whispered, that as mamma was not in the least sentimentally inclined, her going to sleep was entirely owing to her want of taste; and I resolved to send it to some periodical without delay. This was to be kept a profound secret; not a syllable of it would I breathe to any one until the tale was really printed in a conspicuous part of the book, while I was introduced to the public as a dawning star in a most flattering paragraph at the head. I had some thoughts at first of dressing up in boy’s clothes, and taking it to the publisher myself, for I could not make up my mind to intrust any one with the commission; but at

last I concluded to make a confidant of a brother, who was always my abettor in any scheme of mischief; and having, by his advice, written an accompanying note to the editor, in which I required the moderate compensation of fifty dollars, I considered my fortune made.

“‘To tell you the truth, sis,’ observed Joe, in a patronizing tone, after I had read it to him from beginning to end, ‘I think that it is all stuff and nonsense; but perhaps the editor is not a very good judge, and so—’

“Adroitly parrying a box on the ear, he departed on his errand, while I, in a state of restless excitement, awaited his return. It seemed an endless time, but he did come at last, and brought the satisfactory news that he had given the parcel to a man, who told him to call again.

“As soon as possible he went; but the editor had gone out of town, and would not be at home for several weeks. What could I do with myself in the interval? I was only sixteen; and to youth, delay is always hope—so I looked brightly forward to the future; but I did not see what editors had to do with change of air. At the expiration of the time, Joe again proceeded to the office—but my sketch had not yet been examined. The editor was at home, to be sure, but his family all had the scarlet fever, while he himself was suffering from an attack of fever and ague; and more and more surprised at every instance that showed editors to be so much like other people, I was almost in despair.

“The sketch was sent in July; about the middle of October, Joe made his appearance one afternoon with a

most suspicious bulging-out in one of his pockets. I seized my unlucky sketch, and read on it the portentous word—'Declined.'

" 'I'll tell you what it is,' said Joe, 'if you expect to have any eyes left, you had better give up crying about these editors; for if you keep on writing, you'll have plenty of the same business.'

"By his advice the manuscript was laid aside, and I began another tale, which I intended for some other periodical. It was decidedly an improvement upon the first, being of a less sentimental nature; and without reading it to any one, I dispatched it to one of the first magazines in the city, edited by a lady-writer of deserved celebrity. There were the usual goings back and forth, and in due time back came the manuscript, with the words written on it, 'Declined—but would like the writer to try again.'

"There was evidently *something* commendable in it; and almost as much pleased as though it had been published, and the money lying before me, I began a third, which I considered *perfect*; and when it was completed, I modestly wrote that if it *should* be declined, I hoped the editor would state her objections. I had not the least doubt about the piece, and when on the third day Joe made his appearance, with a long face and the sketch in his hand, I seized it in a transport of indignation, and read on a slip of paper attached:

" 'We find much to like in "Amanda's" pieces.' (That was the name I had assumed.) 'What they chiefly lack is originality as to plot, and more force and dramatic

effect in their execution. The first is only to be acquired by long practice, for new plots are becoming more and more rare every day—the latter by close study and application. We would advise “Amanda,” for the present, rather to read the useful and instructive of what has been written, than to increase the already swarming numbers of mediocre writers.’

“The letter was very kind and sensible, but it did not suit me then; while *now* I wonder that such a one could find any thing to praise in my miserable productions. I really think I deserved some credit for my perseverance; for, after a sort time spent in bewailing the fate of my third production, I concluded to try a fourth. This was a sort of historical sketch, where the plot was already made; and, being gifted with considerable imagination and a certain flowery flow of language, I really succeeded very well. Even Joe admired this; but I determined to afford no one else an opportunity of laughing at my efforts again, and he was the only one whom I favored with a sight of the manuscript.

“Where to send it, was the next question. Joe was dispatched to Nassau Street on a tour of investigation, and on his return gave flourishing accounts of ‘Mrs. Methwaite’s Magazine, or the Ladies’ Fireside Companion;’ a work entirely devoted, by the accomplished editress, to the enlightenment and improvement of her own sex, to the cultivation of their morals, ‘and all that sort of thing,’ as Mrs. S. would say. Quite willing to encourage so philanthropic and disinterested an effort, I carefully rolled

up my sketch, and sent Joe off, with renewed hopes. 'Call again,' was the answer; and after calling about a dozen times, Joe was graciously informed that the editress had my sketch under consideration, and would endeavor to make up her mind about it. The next time, the publisher really thought it might appear after a while; and Joe came home with his face in a glow, as he told me how much money I would receive; but the terms did not by any means meet my expectations, and my expressions of disappointment afforded him considerable surprise. But still it would be a beginning, and I thought that mamma's ring might yet come in time.

"Well, to shorten a long story, the piece was actually published; and Joe came dancing home, holding the book high above his head. I snatched it eagerly from him, and tore open the leaves to read my sketch; but at the first glance I was disappointed. The creation of the piece that was to charm the world would be awarded to some one else; the name I had selected was not to be seen; my beautiful sketch was headed, 'by a new contributor!' Oh, it was too provoking! for although I was really in print, people would not recognize me as any thing in particular. Mrs. Methwaite's writings were all most excruciatingly sensible and rational; and perhaps she thought 'Amanda' rather too high-flown an appellation, or perhaps she feared that the morals of her readers would suffer by their wandering off to the 'Children of the Abbey.' However this was, she had given me no name at all; she might just as well have announced me as 'Miss Smith.'

"But crying would not mend the matter—the injury was now beyond all reparation; and I tried to forget it by reading my sketch. How very interesting it was! How it shone amid the others, like a diamond among pebbles! How all the fifty thousand readers of 'The Ladies' Fireside Companion' would be sending letters to know the name of the writer—how supplicatory notes from all the editors would flock in upon me—and perhaps the Queen of France might even send me a diamond bracelet, as she had Mrs. Sigourney, for certainly I was quite equal to *her*!

"When my head became steady enough, I ran to mamma, and announced to her that I was actually in print! She could not believe it at first, but when I assured her that it really was so, she read the sketch with proud delight—keeping wide awake all the time. The news flew through the family like wildfire; and the noise and din at last reached the ears of Uncle John, who grumbled and complained, and wanted to know what it was all about. But when he found that it was really the little insignificant me who had been brought forward with this grand flourish of trumpets, his surprise knew no bounds. He read my sketch, and having pronounced it 'very well for a beginner,' he examined my stockings, to see if there were any holes in them—eat a pudding and pie of my manufacture—and, having told them not to make a fool of me, went back to his retirement.

"The sketch was shown to all who came to the house; and from certain accompanying hints, such as its being

written by a person of their acquaintance, somebody very young and timid, etc., visitors were generally pretty sure to guess the author. The book was almost worn out in its travels around the city; the sketch was admired and wondered at until nothing more remained to be said; the most striking passages were marked; and I was in a fair way of being completely spoiled. There had never been a writer in the family before, and I was as much an object of curiosity as though I had dropped from the clouds.

“But mamma sent the book to some friends of ours—several very good, wealthy old maids, without mentioning my sketch, in order to see what they would say. We called there a short time afterward, and they expressed themselves delighted with the magazine, and wished to know where it could be purchased, adding, that there was *one* article in the number which they should like always to have with them. I began to color up and look very much embarrassed, fancying that the eight eyes of the Misses Mornton were all fixed upon me. Imagine my feelings of wounded vanity when it came out that it was actually one of Mrs. Methwaite’s ‘exhortations to young females’ which had excited their attention, while my piece was not even noticed by them!

“When I returned home, mamma kindly endeavored to soothe my mortification by representing to me that the Misses Mornton were not capable of appreciating such a piece; and I, very willing to be soothed, soon recovered my equanimity. I really wondered that people did not see something particular in my appearance after being in

print. How often I wished to say to people in stores 'Do you know whom you are addressing? I am the author of "Three Scenes in the Life of Royalty!"' Of course they would be thunderstruck immediately. The incense I received was certainly very pleasant and gratifying, but still it would not purchase the diamond ring; and Joe was now dispatched for the money. He came back with the information that Mr. Methwaite, the lady's husband, had gone out of town, and the money would certainly be paid on his return.

"I was highly indignant at this, not conceiving what he had to do with the business; and being somewhat impatient, I concluded to make the publisher a visit myself. One of our numerous cousins, a very respectable maiden lady, who delighted to participate in other people's affairs, was quite willing to accompany me; and we two entered upon the expedition. It was a novel adventure to me, and on approaching the office I began to tremble. The idea of going among a coterie of strange men was any thing but agreeable, and I almost repented my precipitancy. But Cousin Hannah marched resolutely forward, and I followed timidly behind. The door opened; we perceived a long counter filled with papers, at which a middle-aged man of a peculiarly solemn aspect was writing, with a pen behind his ear. He seemed a perfect automaton; he neither looked up as we entered, or gave any indication whatever of our presence; and when Cousin Hannah, with a bow and a slide, inquired if she addressed the publisher of 'Mrs. Methwaite's Magazine,' he merely waved his

hand in an impressive manner toward a dark corner, and thither we adjourned.

"The place looked like a large box, in which the solitary individual who inhabited it had been shut up for some misconduct; and he was now consoling himself by humming the air of Lucy Neal. A small, one-sided counter met our view, on which sat a one-sided man in a one-sided manner; his hat was placed one-sided on his head—his mouth was one-sided—and even his eyes had a decided inclination to the left. Scarcely had the words 'Mrs. Methwaite's Magazine' fallen from the lips of my companion, when the individual wheeled suddenly around, and mechanically seizing the last number, of which there were piles about, he exclaimed: 'Certainly, ma'am—cheapest periodical going—back numbers furnished if required—how many did you say?'

"Cousin Hannah, in a persuasive manner, explained the purpose of our visit; and opening and shutting a knife in the meantime, he replied: 'Ah, indeed! quite another matter. The truth is, we have nothing to do with that part of the business—the editor settles all that. We do the manual labor of the concern (I quite believed that on a glance at his hands), and do not meddle with the contributors. Still the piece will certainly be paid for—it was very good indeed—rather high-flown to be sure, but I have no doubt that more from the same writer would be acceptable.'

"Having said this, he wheeled about and resumed his survey of the ceiling—humming at intervals. I had not

spoken a word, and, quite disgusted, was retreating to the door; but a prudent thought came into Cousin Hannah's mind, and again arresting his attention, she inquired the residence of Mrs. Methwaite. It was number thirteen in some out-of-the-way street that we had never heard of before.

"We persevered, however, for the adventure now began to be quite amusing, and I wished to see how the editress looked; so by dint of inquiring our way, and threading numerous dirty lanes and disagreeable portions of the city, we at length came to the street specified—but it stopped at number twelve. We looked up and down, but all in vain; we could not perceive number thirteen. We rang at number twelve, and inquired for Mrs. Methwaite.

"'Don't know any such person.'

"'Editress of the "Ladies' Fireside Companion,"' added Cousin Hannah, confidentially. But no gleam of intelligence shot across the girl's features, and we proceeded to number eleven.

"Here they were washing windows; and after various exploits of dodging, we found ourselves at the front entrance, where we were obliged to assume a very humble position, in order to avoid the drops of water that trickled down. Happening to cast her eyes upward, Cousin Hannah received a dipper of water full in her face, and we made a hasty retreat. As we went off, I heard a burst of laughter, and the girl who had performed the feat said to a companion: 'House-hunters—I always serve 'em so.'

"At length we approached a row of mean-looking

houses, dignified by the name of 'Clifton Place,' and observing that the numbers were entirely different from the rest of the street, we concluded to try number thirteen. The Irish girl who came to the door answered our inquiry in the affirmative, and we entered the small parlor. We were quite surprised that not a book was visible—we supposed that they would almost constitute the entire furniture; and seating ourselves, we awaited the appearance of Mrs. Methwaite. The rooms were the smallest I have ever seen, and a passion-vine extended over the framework of the doors between, while the windows were draped with thin curtains, although it was winter.

"The lady entered at length, in a calico morning-dress; and she is sufficiently described when I say that she looked exactly like a person who would write as she did. Her hair was parted on one side, and dressed up very high, which gave her unusual stature a still more elevated appearance. Having bowed, she quietly seated herself, and fixing her eyes upon me, waited for us to speak. I felt very much embarrassed, for there was a certain imperturbable self-command about her that annoyed me exceedingly; but I must give some reason for coming, and at length I said:

" 'I called to see about that piece published in the last number of your magazine.'

" 'Which piece?' with the most aggravating calmness.

" 'A sketch entitled "Three Scenes in the Life of Royalty,"' I replied. 'It has not yet been paid for.'

" 'Ye-s, we never pay for first pieces.'

“‘Not pay for first pieces!’ I exclaimed, provoked at her coolness. ‘The publisher told us that it would certainly be paid for, and referred us to you.’

“‘Not at all,’ she replied, slowly; ‘he had no right to do so; we do the editorial work of the establishment, and have nothing to do with that part of the business; but young authors are never paid for their first pieces.’

“I was so angry at the woman’s dishonesty that I could scarcely speak at all; but her perfectly composed manner provoked me still more. There was something particularly aggravating in her ‘not at all,’ and her very slow manner of speaking; being such a rattle-brain myself, I stood on very uneven ground with her; but I defended my cause with all the eloquence I could muster, for mamma’s diamond ring gleamed in the distance, and urged me on.

“‘That is a settled rule with us,’ rejoined the lady, when I had paused to take breath; ‘I never was paid for *my* first pieces.’

“‘Perhaps they were not worth paying for,’ trembled on my tongue, but I prudently restrained myself. There was no use in wasting more time, and when Cousin Hannah, to keep up our incognita, said, ‘Come, Amanda,’ I needed no second bidding. Mrs. Methwaite remained seated on her sofa, with one finger resting on her cheek—perhaps thinking of a subject for her next exhortation, or practicing an attitude for her portrait.

“We reached home, and the pent-up stream of my indignation burst forth—being further increased by the anger and sympathy of the whole family conclave. But as I

looked around upon our pleasant rooms, and mentally compared them with the forlorn place I had just left, I felt more mollified toward Mrs. Methwaite, and finally I began to laugh at the whole affair; revenging myself by drawing as ludicrous a picture of the adventure as possible—and to possess this talent is, I can assure you, a great satisfaction—when you can get no other.

“My garret now became a place of great importance, for I had emerged from my chrysalis a real authoress; and people began to take journeys thither to solicit a piece of poetry, or beg to be favored with hearing some of my manuscript productions. Determined to show Mrs. Methwaite what she had lost, I applied myself with renewed vigor, and produced quite a humorous little sketch, which I interspersed with one or two original anecdotes, that could not fail to strike any lover of the ridiculous. Joe having found another magazine, I dispatched it thither, accompanied by a note, in which I expressly stipulated that they should not publish it without paying for it. A long time elapsed before I could receive any answer; but at length the publisher desired an interview with me, and as Joe gave quite a promising account of his appearance and manners, I concluded to go and have a quarrel with him.

“So Cousin Hannah and I again set forth; and having entered the office, we found a pleasant, laughing kind of a man, who looked as different as possible from Mrs. Methwaite's one-sided curiosity. He came forward on our entrance; and as Cousin Hannah observed, ‘I believe you

requested an interview with Amanda,' he fixed his eyes upon her, as though he supposed *her* to be 'Amanda,' and glanced at me as one might look at a well-behaved child. I, as usual, said nothing; but Cousin Hannah drew me forward, and I felt partly embarrassed and partly angry at the stare with which the publisher favored me. My slight figure and demure expression always made me look much younger than I really was; and a certain willful, spoilt-child kind of a manner favored the deceit. I drew myself up, and tried to look important, but I felt that I could not succeed.

"Observing that I was not disposed to speak, Cousin Hannah made an inquiry for my sketch, which had now been there a long time. The publisher replied that his editor was very well pleased with it, and had praised it highly; but there were so many articles on hand that he did not know when it would appear. He then spoke in a very patronizing manner of 'bringing me out'—not heeding my assertion that I was 'out' already; and made a long speech, the sum and substance of which appeared to be that I was neither Mrs. Sigourney, Mrs. Stevens, nor Mrs. Osgood. He probably expected me to be crushed and overwhelmed with a sense of my inferiority; and when, in an impatient tone, I suddenly exclaimed—

" 'Well, and what does all this amount to?' he stopped short, and surveyed me with surprise. The dignity which I assumed did not sit well upon me, for he appeared rather amused than angry, and provoked me very much by complimenting me as one would flatter a pretty child. 'He

was sorry,' he said, 'that his editor was out—he would have been delighted to see me.' He added that 'he was an old bachelor, to be sure, and rather crusty besides; but perhaps I might succeed in thawing him.'

"I gave him to understand by a curl of the lip that I should not undertake the office; and Cousin Hannah, never losing sight of business, renewed the subject of terms. The publisher then began to say that the book hardly paid its expenses, and that people really seemed to think that the poor publishers could live on nothing, or make their dinners off of sheets of paper—apparently looking upon me as the cause of his faring no better. During this tirade I indignantly pulled Cousin Hannah's sleeve, and begged her to go. But on noticing the expression of my face, he remarked that it was a pity to spoil it so; and abandoning the subject of his own wrongs, he promised to speak to the editor in favor of my piece. I had taken up a magazine to admire a pretty engraving, and perceiving that it contained the beginning of an interesting tale, he found the other numbers, and tying them all up neatly, handed them to me to take home. I went there to quarrel with the man, but returned very well pleased, with my hands full of books.

"Concluding to be as patient as possible, I amused myself with scribbling other sketches, while waiting for the publication of the former. It appeared at last; and on opening the leaves, there was my name as plain as could be. Giving vent to an expressive observation for the benefit of Mrs. Methwaite, I sat down to peruse my sketch.

As I proceeded, I became rather bewildered; there was the title of the piece as I had written it, and there was my name at the head; but the words appeared very different; there were many sentences left out which I had put in, and many put in that I had left out. A ludicrous anecdote, which I considered the beauty of the piece, was omitted altogether; and the whole style was stiff, affected, and forced. Each sentence sounded as though it had been carefully weighed beforehand; and instead of the easy, rattling style in which such an article should be written, the whole seemed labored, and showed plainly that the writer was trying her best to be funny.

“But this was not all; the tone was not even feminine—it sounded just as though an odious man had written it, and an old bachelor, too; for in speaking of a contemplated wedding, I said that ‘it was fancied to be all done and settled—the preliminaries, honey-moon, and all, hurried rapidly over’—and that old witch of an editor tucked in a paraphrase, ‘not to forget that most important of all, *the proposal*.’ Oh! I could have shaken him with right good will. He spoke somewhere of gout, too, and put in so many coarse expressions, that I was really ashamed of having my name attached to it; and when mamma came to congratulate me, she found me almost in a state of hysterics, sobbing as though my heart would break.

“‘Just to think,’ I exclaimed, ‘of that old simpleton’s daring to spoil my piece so, when he can’t write fit to be seen himself! Hear some of his poetry, mother; he puts in all sorts of queer little verses wherever he can find room.’”

"Mamma smiled as I read, with ridiculous emphasis,

" 'When Cynthia's beams come gently down
On flow'rets bathed in dew,
Methinks her beams are like to thee,
The beautiful and true.'

"Splendid, is it not? But such was really the style of his productions; and he evidently considered himself a poet. Without waiting for my passion to subside, I immediately dispatched Joe to the publisher with a note, in which I requested him never again to attach my name to any production of his editor's, as I did not think that it would reflect much credit upon me, if one could judge from his poetry; adding that I considered my sketch entirely spoiled, and must decline sending any more, unless I could be sure that they would be published just as they were written.

"Joe said that the publisher laughed heartily at this epistle, and then seating himself at his desk, he wrote me the following answer:

" 'MY DEAR MISS AMANDA,'—*his* dear miss, indeed! thought I;—'I regret that you are not pleased with the editor's alterations in your sketch; but, believe me, I had nothing to do with it, and was quite unaware that he had made them. He is very particular, and often trims up articles to suit himself; but I will certainly tell him that you wish him to let yours alone in future. Do not be too hard upon his poetry, for it costs him hours of close labor—and it really is not so bad but it might be worse.'

"I thought that the editor would feel complimented if

he could but see this; but the idea of his 'trimming up' was too provoking. He had trimmed until there was nothing left worth reading.

"A short time after, having occasion to take another pilgrimage to the publisher's office, as I approached the door, I perceived that there was some one in the office besides the publisher; and upon a further investigation I perceived a man, dressed in a suit of pepper-and-salt, who sat with his chair tipped in the Yankee fashion, cutting a stick. A hat considerably too large for him was pulled down over his brows, and his clothes all had the appearance of having been thrown upon him at random. I do not suppose he had his best clothes on, to be sure—and dress makes a great difference with every one. Being peculiarly fastidious on this point, I amused Mr. Wendinghall very much, before we were married, by asking him if he had any second clothes—adding that if he ever wore them, I should soon be disenchanted.

"But pardon me, my dear friend, I am wandering most widely from my text. Where was I? Oh, about that editor. I did not wish to go in while he remained in the office; so, after taking a survey of him through the glass door, I returned home. I really received the money in due time; and you would have laughed to hear of the various wonderful things to be achieved with the fortune I expected to make. But, alas! for my air-built castles, the magazine was soon after broken up, and both editor and publisher disappeared as suddenly as though they had been carried off in a whirlwind.

"I began to find it quite exciting to do battle with the publishers, and write and receive notes so often; and as my sketches were now quite admired, I continued to write. It was really a great amusement to me—I always had a keen perception of the ridiculous, and any amusing anecdote that I heard, or ludicrous scene that I witnessed, was always turned to account. But do not look so disapprovingly; they were never *friends* whom I dressed up in this manner—only enemies or strangers. For pity's sake, spare me the lecture commencing about doing good for evil; it always reminds me of 'dogs delight to bark and bite.' It is said that to return good for evil is heavenly—to return evil for evil is human—but to return evil for good is fiendish. I find it impossible as yet to get on further in the scale of goodness than being human.

"‘The ups and downs of Lot Wyman’ have been written upon, and I have sometimes felt disposed to write the ups and downs of ‘Amanda’ in the fields of literature—for few scribblers have met with so many adventures and mishaps. But these misfortunes, I must say, were chiefly attendant upon the outset of my career; do not think that the editors were all like Mrs. Methwaite and the old bachelor; I met with many refined and accomplished gentlemen, and the more I saw of them the more I was disposed to change my sentiments respecting them. I had taken up writing for amusement, and to get mamma a ring; but I tired of it after a while—and when I was nineteen, I found both the ring and—Mr. Wendinghall.

"If you are not already weary of hearing me talk about

myself, I will tell you how we happened to meet. I wrote poetry, too, you must know, and these effusions were always of a very sentimental cast. There was hidden away in the depths of my harum-scarum character, a little corner of romance, which I often indulged at twilight; and my poetry, I can assure you, would bear criticism much better than that of the old bachelor editor. Well, it so happened that Mr. Wendinghall, being wealthy and intellectual, and not having much else to do, attentively perused my verses whenever they appeared; and finally indited a poem to me through the pages of the same periodical, under the signature of 'Feramorz.' I began to think that this looked very romantic; and my twilight dreams were now sometimes interspersed with thoughts of the young poet. I did not reply to him, for that, I thought, would be rather bold; but I will say that I wished very much to see him. I pictured him as a pale, grave, interesting sort of a youth, brimming over with romance and poetry; and I found him—but I will tell you all about it. He, it seems, thought of me as a delicate, ethereal-looking creature, something like a glimpse of moonlight in appearance, who wore her hair in natural curls, and never spoke above a whisper.

"At a large party, one night, I was very much amused with the lively sallies and brilliant conversation of a gentleman whom I had never seen before; while he, on his part, seemed equally attracted by 'the pretty hoyden,' as he afterward spoke of me.

"'Ah,' said the lady of the house, as she passed us,

'you two together? That is as it should be—'Feramorz' and 'Amanda.'

"*'Feramorz and Amanda!'* He started and I started, while both read the disappointment traced in each other's countenance. Our enjoyment for that evening was completely spoiled. I went home and cried over my folly, while he walked the floor all night—at least so he says, but I do not much believe him.

"But the next morning he concluded to come and see if I *was* so dreadfully wild; and I thought him not *quite* so laughing as he had been the evening before; after two or three interviews we began to grow quite grave in each other's estimation; and finally, like two great foolish children, we got married—and now laugh merrily at all romance, the world, and ourselves."

At this point of the narrative, letters, papers, and all were going into the fire, but I rescued them almost from the flames; and now, like the ghost of one long buried and forgotten, "Amanda" again appears upon the stage.

1870

ONE OF MY DISAPPOINTMENTS.

I heard thy voice—I spoke again—
I gazed upon thy face,
And never scene of breathing life
Could leave a deeper trace,
Than all that fancy conjured up,
And made thee look and say,
Till I have loathed reality,
That chased such dream away.—MISS LONDON.

Y NEVER, on going to a place for the first time, formed an idea of it beforehand, but that it was sure to be totally different; never pictured to myself any much-praised individual, who did not prove extremely disagreeable; and never imagined the probable appearance of any expected present, but it invariably turned out to be the very thing I did not want, or had plenty of already. And yet I was always dreaming and imagining; I could not help it; my imagination *would* run away with me, and it was too much trouble always to run after it and bring it back. There was, from early childhood, concealed in the inmost depths and recesses of my heart, an ardent, longing wish, cherished and hopeless, yet beloved, and dwelt upon as some bright fairy vision. It appeared to me that

my happiness would be complete, my cup of bliss filled to overflowing, could I but behold an *authoress*—a real, live *authoress* ! But hear her speak—see her breathing before me—and actually behaving like other people!—but no, she never could behave like other people ; that was utterly impossible. Preposterous idea ! An ethereal, refined, fairy-like creature—a personation of one of her own exquisite ideals—to take her three meals a day, go to bed and get up, and be governed by the silly rules of society like any one else ? Absurd !

I absolutely devoured every book that came in my way, and raised my pet authors up to such an eminence that it fairly dazzled me to look upon them. Scott was like the glorious sun, flashing radiantly around in his majestic splendor—Moore seemed more like the silvery moon, sweet, plaintive, and fascinating, surrounded by starry gems—Byron was a sort of demi-god—and Mrs. Hemans and Miss Landon were objects of my greatest powers of adoration. Oh, how earnestly did I long for the power of expressing my thoughts in verse ! . Had I been a poetess, I felt that I should have cared for nothing else. The world might be a perfect blank—hurricanes sweep around, storms descend and drench me—I should possess a talisman against it all. Often have I sat for hours in a little bower, wreathed with honeysuckle and roses, abundantly provided with pencil and paper, in order to seize upon the inspiration, in case I should have “a call.” I would sometimes put three lines together without being able to find a fourth, and after ransacking the whole rhyming dictionary, give it

up in despair. The nearest attempt I ever made to poetizing was in contributing my mite to a curious medley which we all produced together on the occasion of leaving boarding-school, where the usual diet consisted of flour boiled with water, and dignified with the name of pudding—being further improved with a sauce of molasses.

This was the extent of my literary efforts; and being debarred from admiring my own productions, I reveled in those of others. Every little gem of poetry found in magazines or newspapers was carefully treasured up; those which particularly struck my fancy I committed to memory, and my dreams were always filled with the various Estelles, Cynthias, and Florences who had thus distinguished themselves. Scott, of course, would look down upon me; Moore would be surprised; and Byron might turn up his aristocratic nose, should I send a petition for a friendly intimacy; therefore it was clear, even with the limited stock of sense which my poetical mania had left me, that I must confine such favors exclusively to those who resided at least on the same side of the Atlantic. I did, to be sure, in the midst of this frenzy, obtain a glimpse of an authoress who cooled down my ardor for some time.

Not far from us there was a pleasant, old-fashioned farm-house, quite celebrated for its strawberries and cream. Its inmates were very good-hearted, plain kind of people, and as the distance was a pleasant walk, we often went there to regale ourselves on the before-mentioned luxuries. One season there was quite an excitement about

a lady who was said to have taken board there for the summer. Various queer stories were soon afloat of her manners and ways; but those whose curiosity was thus raised, seldom found an opportunity of gratifying it, for the strange lady kept herself very secluded, and seldom ventured out. Some said that she was a countess in disguise; some, that she was a patient escaped from the lunatic asylum, and some, that she was an *authoress*. I seized upon the latter idea, and, as soon as possible, paid a visit to the farm-house. All appeared as usual; no stranger was to be seen; and cheerful, good-humored Mrs. Trolger, received me with the same open smile, as she produced a tempting dish of strawberries.

At last, perceiving that she was not disposed to be at all communicative on the subject, I ventured to question her respecting her new inmate. She evidently evaded my inquiries, but I persevered, and found, to my great delight, that there was really a lady-authoress under the self-same roof. I desired to see her immediately, but Mrs. Trolger replied, in great consternation, that this could not be thought of, as the lady kept her room door locked, and was always very angry at being disturbed; adding, that she had particularly enjoined upon her not to let people know she was there, as she was composing some great work, and must have uninterrupted quiet to arrange her ideas. My imagination, formed of rather combustible materials, was in a blaze immediately (I was quite a young fool—only sixteen), and I felt that I must see that lady, if I made a forcible entrance through the window of her apartment.

Mrs. Trolger, perceiving my disappointment, told me that if I walked in the garden, I might chance to see the authoress at her window, as she often raised it to call her servant. The good woman smiled as she saw my eagerness, for the words were scarcely spoken, ere I had turned down the shaded walks in all the joy of anticipation. That window was to me a charmed spot; I fixed my eyes upon it with an intense, longing gaze, I walked back and forth, up and down the walks, still keeping the window in sight, but nothing could I see except those tantalizing white curtains. I began to get impatient, pulled some roses to pieces, and meditated an attack on the strawberry-bed. At length—can it be reality? yes! the curtain really moves, a figure relieves the dreary surface of dull white—I bend eagerly forward, screening myself from sight behind a large seringo bush—my heart beats almost audibly—my ears are strained to catch the softest note, when a voice calls out loudly:

“Sairy, Sairy! Are them things dry yet?”

I felt rather bewildered, and placed my hand before my eyes. The mist was rapidly clearing away, and with an enlightened vision I beheld the figure of a stout woman, dressed in a linen short gown (it was a warm day), skirt of some undistinguishable color, and a soiled cap with yellow ribbons. I staid no longer to look; I rushed hastily into the house, seized my bonnet, and turned my steps homeward. My dream was rudely broken, and in vain I tried to chase away that figure. It would keep dancing before my eyes, and seemed to laugh at me for all the

visions I had cherished. Poor Mrs. Trolger afterward discovered that her boarder, far from being one of the literati, was afflicted with a species of mild insanity, in which she fancied herself an authoress; and having been placed at the quiet farm-house, was provided with plenty of paper, and allowed to scribble to her heart's content.

It was not a great while ere I quite recovered from the effects of this blow, and again returned to my favorite poets and poetesses. Some time after, I discovered in the "Metropolitan Journal" a sweet little piece of poetry with the simple signature, "Virginia." The lay was a melancholy one, but every sentiment was so high and pure, every word so graceful and well-chosen—yet the whole was a fresh burst of melody that had gushed right up from the heart; the lines bore no trace of stiffness or affectation—it was like the sweet strains of an Eolian harp. I read it over and over, I found myself repeating portions of it, and in my sleep I murmured the name, "Virginia." The Journal again made its appearance; I hastily cut the leaves, and there was another piece of poetry, more beautiful, if possible, than the former, and bearing the same sweet signature. I thought of Paul and Virginia; I called to mind the description of the young girl on the lonely island, and felt sure that my Virginia must answer to it. Again and again I hung fascinated over the strains of this unknown songstress; every succeeding number brought forth deeper, sweeter notes, and often would the tear start to my eye, and the color leave my cheek involuntarily, as I pondered over words of

mournful tenderness, and read of griefs and yearnings breathed in lines of touching pathos. She was young, too; she spoke of "wasting bloom," and the trampled love of a "young, warm heart"—she was unhappy, for was not her song ever of sorrow? She was lonely, isolated, and I pined to bestow on her my sympathy and companionship; but with a reverential feeling, a sense of my great inferiority and littleness in comparison; yet I could, at least, understand the beautiful sentiments that seemed to flow spontaneously from her heart—I could *appreciate* her, and to be appreciated is seldom the lot of poetesses.

I dreamed, one night, that "Virginia" stood beside me with long, unbound hair of wavy gold, violet eyes, and cheek tinged with the soft hue of the ocean shell, that slumbers in its melody on the shores of Ind; there she stood, the bright ideal of my creation, and she smiled upon me, and beckoned me to follow her. "I can not come to you," said the vision, "for I know you not in my mortal form—you must come to me." Like a mist it faded away, and I awoke to morning and reality. I pondered over my dream, I read those glowing passages over and over, and being gifted with a large share of energy and enterprise, I immediately dispatched a note to the editor of the Journal, requesting him to inform me where "Virginia" resided. It seemed a long time, to my excited expectation, ere the wished-for answer arrived; but at length it came, bringing the desired information. My poetess lived at some distance from my own place of res-

idence, in a pretty village on the sea-shore ; and I pictured her walking on the beach, and listening to the music of the waves, while beautiful thoughts glided into her soul, harmonious as the notes of a soft-toned lute—or at night, when more common-place minds were buried in slumber, I imagined her seated on a jutting rock, with the waters rippling at her feet, and the soft moonbeams lighting up her face into a glow of ethereal beauty. I kept a scrap-book, of course, among my other girlish propensities, and there was one picture that I loved to look upon. The subject was “Moonlight,” and the only figure was that of a young female, with a clear, wide brow, and dreamy, up-turned eyes, full of inspiration. Her long, unbound hair floated on the breeze, a harp rested beside her ; beyond, was the quiet sea, above, the clear evening sky, and all was tinged with such a sweet, subdued light, that it seemed almost nature. The young girl had the face of “Virginia”—“Virginia,” as I had pictured her in her island home ; it seemed a fit personification of those lofty sentiments.

Distance having thus materially interfered with any Quixotic expedition I meditated of seeking my authoress in person, I resolved to write, express my admiration, and wish for an intimacy, and request her to open a correspondence. With what a beating heart I penned that epistle ! I wasted several sheets of paper, underlined and underlined until the meaning was scarce legible, and, finally, with a trembling hand, applied myself to make a readable copy. What I said I can scarcely remember. I

have dim recollections of high-flown expressions of rapture, an account of my dreams and ardent wishes, and a timid hope that my rhapsody would be answered as soon as possible. The editor had stated that all communications could be addressed to "Virginia," as the lady declined having her real name made public. The name was, accordingly, inscribed on the back, and with a seal composed of two hands joined together in friendship, the missive was complete, and as soon as possible dispatched to the post-office. I must confess, that once or twice Miss Edgeworth's "*L'Amie Inconnue*" floated across my mind; and as I remembered Angelina's first interview with her friend, where Orlando holds the tea-kettle, and his mistress drinks brandy and water, I felt rather apprehensive of the result. But, then, I reflected that the case was different; I was not abandoning my friends for a cottage of sweet retirement, with a person whom I had never seen; and to compare "Virginia" with *Arethusa*! So I waited anxiously for the expected reply from my unknown poetess, and traveled the road to the post-office so often, that I could almost count the stones on the way.

At length came a note, neat, refined, and lady-like; the paper, seal, and all were perfectly proper and appropriate; and behold me now in regular correspondence with a poetess! She thanked me in graceful terms for my enthusiastic praise, expressed the pleasure it gave her to have her verses read by one who appreciated them, and concluded with a wish to deserve my proffered friendship, and a request that I would soon write again. Letters

passed back and forth ; I now and then received a choice *morceau* of poetry, written for me alone ; and at length we exchanged locks of hair. I was rather disappointed not to find the wavy gold I had pictured ; but I received a soft curl of a chestnut hue, which I treasured carefully and reverentially. This correspondence continued for about a year ; the poetess always signed her letters with the name of " Virginia," while I took that of " Florence ;" and to none did I divulge this secret interchange of ideas but my mother, and one dear friend whom I had known from childhood. To Mrs. Tracy I always showed my own letters and those of " Virginia." She smiled at the curious correspondence, but praised the writings of my unknown friend with a degree of enthusiasm that satisfied even me.

About a twelvemonth after the commencement of our correspondence, I went abroad for some time ; I gazed on the beautiful Rhine ; I stood within the dark aisles of Westminster Abbey, surrounded by the tombs of sovereigns and poets ; I passed over ground hallowed by the footsteps of Goethe and Schiller, and things that had interested me before gradually lost their influence. I saw the spot of Byron's dream—the tomb of Petrarch ; and " Virginia" was forgotten. I returned home with a mind full of new and beautiful images. Before long I married ; and with that one sober act laid aside my girlish follies. I had now seen several authoresses—some I did like, and some I did not like ; I found them very much like the rest of the world, and quite lost my *penchant* for a poetess-friend. I supposed that " Virginia" still graced her village

home, and wrote sonnets to the moon ; but I was not destined to get off so easily.

I was one evening at a party, given in honor of my own humble self while making my *debut* as a bride, when Mrs. Tracy whispered that she had just ascertained that an old friend of mine was present, whom she had no doubt but I would be delighted to see. "Certainly ; I was always pleased to see old friends, but who could it possibly be ? I could not for the life of me imagine." Mrs. Tracy looked smiling and important, like one who has some very pleasant secret to divulge ; and after making me guess all the possible and impossible friends I could think of, she asked me if I had forgotten "Virginia." "*Virginia!*" the name brought up old memories, and almost laughing at my youthful absurdity, I still found tucked away a little tiny bit of curiosity to behold the original of my fairy ideals. Mrs. Tracy spoke a few words to the lady of the house, she gave a graceful assent, held a short communication with some one at the other end of the room, and returned accompanied by a lady, whom, after mentioning our respective names of "Virginia" and "Florence," she presented to me as *Miss Mary Ann Quigley!* Heavens and earth ! what a name for a poetess !

I had no opportunity to make any proper acknowledgement ; I was suddenly seized in a most rapturous embrace, as she murmured the name of "Florence"—and being quite *petite* in figure, and not much accustomed to doing battle, I found myself altogether unable to cope with the strength of my Herculean assailant. Demonstrations of,

love are quite ruinous to full dress, and I actually trembled for my poor, gauze-like robes, so frail to encounter such rough handling; but the worst of all was the surprise and amusement which this scene created. I felt the blood tingling in my cheeks at the ill-suppressed smiles of those around, and with a desperate effort, I freed myself, at length, from my tormentor. She held me off for inspection, saying, as she gazed upon me: "Your own account of yourself, dear Florence, was so very modest, that I find you infinitely more charming than I expected."

I wished that I could return the compliment; but, alas! all that I could see of "Virginia" was the hair, which exactly resembled the lock she had sent me, and was really very beautiful and abundant; but her complexion was almost as dark in hue, having been ruined by constant exposure to the sea-air; her features were on a remarkably large scale—mouth especially, and her stature almost gigantic—at least so it appeared to little, insignificant me, who looked up, and up, and up, without seeming to reach the climax. My hitherto unknown friend had evidently passed the portals of extreme youth, and fell as far short my youthful ideas of a poetess as possible; she was *common-place*, and had that bustling kind of manner which seems to pry into every one's affairs at once. She was the daughter of a country clergyman, the Rev. Phineas Quigley, and had, of course, received a good education; in conversation she expressed herself well and fluently, and never seemed at a loss on any subject whatever. She was not at all troubled with bashfulness. All that evening she

followed me about like a shadow ; I could not move without her ; and she informed me that she was now on a visit to the lady at whose house we then were, with whom she should probably pass the winter. I detected a pretty strong hint for an invitation, but I could not make up my mind to give it.

The next day, as I was lying very comfortably on a sofa in my boudoir, with a coal-fire glowing brightly before me, and an interesting book in my hand, I was suddenly startled by a dark apparition close at my side ; and raising my eyes, they rested, to my great surprise, on the smiling face of Miss Quigley.

"If you ever were so absorbed in my poems," said the unexpected visitor, "I should be quite satisfied. The servant told me at first that you were engaged, and had denied yourself to visitors ; but I let her know that I was no visitor at all, but an old friend whom you would be very glad to see. So I made my way directly up here, and had been waiting some time for you to take your eyes off that book. I do not intend to stand upon ceremony."

I never hear people use this expression but it makes me fairly groan ; I know what it is from experience. Of course I could do no less than close my book, raise my recumbent figure, and ask my visitor to take a seat. Miss Quigley's things were soon laid aside ; observing that she had come to pass a quiet morning with me, and talk over our former correspondence. She took one or two of my letters from her work-bag, and I felt considerably annoyed as I saw my youthful folly thus arrayed

in black and white against me. She spoke of *her* notes, and I murmured something of "fatigue," and "locked up" (I had burned them), and came off as well as could be expected. Miss Quigley was a very good-natured, very independent, very smart, and very companionable person of about thirty-five; she was one who could make her way through the world extremely well, assumed a good-naturedly patronizing tone while conversing with you, and had an extremely blunt perception of slights or coldness. I told her my romantic ideas of her as I had pictured her seated on a rock in the moonlight, at which she laughed heartily, and said that she did not remember ever to have done such a thing—in the first place she should be afraid and in the next, she would certainly take cold. A poetess *afraid*, and think of *taking cold*! Dear, dear! how the world had degenerated! Miss Quigley staid to luncheon having provided herself with an interminable piece of knitting-work, and with very little urging staid to dinner when, seeing that I could not help it, I gave her an invitation to a party that evening—the preparations for which had been considerably hindered by her social visit. She expressed herself delighted to have happened in just at the right time, and with an affectionate kiss, promised to come early, in order, as she said, to help me entertain the guests. She acted up to her promise, for she did really entertain them very much indeed—chiefly with an account of our former correspondence.

Miss Quigley's cloak and hood were the first that graced the ladies' dressing-room; and, very much at her ease, the

poetess took her seat in a conspicuous place, starting forward every now and then to welcome some dear friend, of whom she appeared to have a countless number. She informed several of my guests that "she had no doubt I would be very glad to see them," and behaved in many respects as though she were the lady of the house—not I. Such a tongue I had hardly ever encountered before; it was not at rest for five minutes together, but kept up a perpetual chattering with any one she could fasten on as a listener. Her manners were very popular, and she appeared universally liked; while I, in some surprise, found the novel task of entertaining company, which I had quite dreaded, altogether taken off my hands. There was scarcely an individual present who was not enlightened, before the evening was over, on the subject of our poetical friendship. She always called me "Florence," and related the story with infinite amusement, as something quite rich and original. It is not very pleasant to have one's youthful performances, especially when they savor a little of the sentimental, brought up for the edification of the public; and I wished that Miss Quigley would let the story rest, while I hated the very name of "Florence." But that was by no means her intention; she wished to explain to people the very curious circumstances which had brought us together, in order to account for the many endearments she bestowed upon me—which, being quite unable to resist her strength, I passively endured. Being the daughter of a clergyman, and a poetess besides, her acquaintances were quite numerous; and people smiled, both at the

story and the manner in which I was victimized—while I, alas! little thought that my romantic enthusiasm would be the means of getting me into such a scrape.

That woman became an actual torment. I never left the house but she seized upon me; I never entered a store but she was there; I never went out visiting but I met her; I never staid at home but she came to see me. People, seeing us so much together, took it for granted that the love was as much on my side as hers, and invited her everywhere, out of compliment to *me*. It was impossible to get rid of her; she had grasped me with a tenacious hold, and our fates seemed linked together. If I went any where to avoid her, at that very place we were sure to meet; and the story of Florence and Virginia had now become pretty well known to the whole circle of our acquaintances. She spent New Year's day with me, in order to relieve my diffidence in receiving the visitors; she passed mornings, afternoons, and evenings at the house; she came to luncheon, dinner, and tea; and only waited the slightest invitation to have her trunks brought and herself regularly established as an inmate.

I was surprised that she had so little tact. All this parade of friendship was any thing but agreeable to me, and I am sure I made not the slightest advances; but she appeared so determined to take it for granted that I must be delighted with her society, that coldness made no impression. I could only "bide my time"—or, rather, *hers*. I never could understand how people who expressed such beautiful sentiments in poetry could ever be common-

place in the ordinary transactions of life. It appeared to me that the spirit of beauty, which thus expressed itself in words, must be displayed even in the very dress, which should be free from the slightest tinge of vulgarity; it *must* give a refinement of manner, which I vainly looked for in Miss Quigley. It does not follow, of course, that a poetess must be beautiful—that is not left to her own decision; and it may be the very want of this possession which calls forth such beautiful images in describing pure and lofty sentiments; but for a poetess to be bustling and intrusive, seems altogether inconsistent.

Miss Quigley appeared to entertain the highest opinion of my judgment; she frequently brought poems for my inspection, which I could not read with the same interest as formerly, and even solicited my consent to dedicate a forthcoming volume to me. I still possessed some few sparks of ambition, which only needed fanning into a flame, and at first there was something rather pleasant in the idea of being a patroness of the arts and sciences; but my good man decidedly vetoed the whole proceeding—expressing his opinion that, should the thing fail, I would be responsible for the failure. Of course, I very properly yielded the point; though rather disappointed that I seemed fated to reap neither pleasure nor fame in my most unexpected discovery of “Virginia.” The poetess was a great flatterer, which certainly was a very fortunate thing for me, as it proved in the end, for I believe it was the means of my getting rid of her.

There was an old bachelor, named M’Elrath, who fre-

quently came to the house, being quite an old friend and favorite of my husband's, and notwithstanding the difference in their ages, there was a most remarkable resemblance between the two, which resemblance was far more agreeable to the old bachelor than his friend; for Mr. M'Elrath was really ugly in appearance, while my husband was strikingly handsome. The bachelor was wealthy, unencumbered with relatives, and had now and then thrown out hints of marrying; he was almost afraid to take the plunge—women were so deceitful, and extravagant, and troublesome—but he didn't know what might happen, if he met with one to suit him in every respect; and we imagined that Miss Quigley seemed better pleased to encounter Mr. M'Elrath during her visits. Perhaps she had concluded that it would be better to share the old bachelor's lot than stay at home and write poetry. However that might be, she certainly exerted all her powers upon him, and apparently with some degree of success; for although Mr. M'Elrath had rather shrunk at first from her coarse features and masculine appearance, yet flattery is even a more powerful net than beauty, and she certainly plied him well with it—particularly dwelling on the strong resemblance between him and his handsome friend, which she saw afforded him the greatest pleasure. She even discovered points of resemblance which no one else had ever imagined; and the grateful bachelor seemed about to reward her with a surrender of himself and his worldly possessions, when a most unfortunate mistake entirely deranged all her plans and expectations.

Miss Quigley was no less anxious to ingratiate herself into favor with the master of the house; and perceiving that the likeness annoyed my husband as much as it pleased Mr. M'Elrath, she wisely ridiculed the idea of any resemblance at all when beyond the hearing of the old bachelor, and really displayed a great deal of skill in regulating her batteries so as not to let one interfere with the other. I was infinitely amused at this by-play when I saw my better half (he was only a man, you know), quite puffed up with self-complacency at Miss Quigley's soothing observations; and then glanced at poor Mr. M'Elrath, whose countenance expressed undisguised pleasure, and he fancied himself quite an Adonis while listening to the delightful compliments of the poetess.

The resemblance between the two was really surprising, however; so much so that it even deceived Miss Quigley herself; who, passing through the hall one day, toward dusk, and encountering, as she supposed, my husband on the stairs, immediately began to condole with him, on the annoyance he must suffer in being plagued with looking like that odious Mr. M'Elrath?

"Such a fright!" she continued, "there is no more likeness between you than between a bear and an Adonis. It quite amuses me to hear people talk so ridiculously. For my part, I see no resemblance whatever."


"I am very much obliged to you, madam," said Mr. M'Elrath (for he it was), "for at length opening my eyes. So, I am a fright, am I?—Well, I believe you are not far wrong, but I will no longer be a fool. 'The *odious* Mr.

M'Elrath,'” said he, with a low bow, “has the happiness of wishing you a very good evening.”

My husband just then made his appearance, and on comprehending the matter, was quite unable to restrain his laughter. But Miss Quigley endeavored to carry off the affair with a good grace. “The old bore!” said she, “I believe that I have at last got rid of him. The poor man seemed to enjoy it so much, that one could scarcely in pity forbear flattering him a little now and then on this fancied resemblance; but my true sentiments, it seems, could no longer be restrained.”

My husband, however, quite unheeding her flattery, plainly showed by his manner that he very much doubted whether those were her *true* sentiments; and Miss Quigley, now that the bird had flown, kindly freed us from her daily presence. She returned home to her own village, and I never heard from her since, except to receive a very pretty volume of poems—the same she wished to dedicate to me. The poetry was really beautiful—more touching, if possible, than any of her former productions. They quite recalled the old feeling with which I had perused her writings in girlhood; but alas! the charm was now broken; I tried to think of “Virginia,” but in vain—I could only see *Mary Ann Quigley*.

THE HIGGINBOTHAMS.

OMING events are said to cast their shadows before; but every thing at the Northwells proceeded just as though nothing different from usual were about to occur. Mr. Northwell went to his lawyer's office, as was his daily custom; Mrs. Northwell, after alternately teasing and fascinating, as was *her* daily custom, stepped to the mirror to arrange her curls under a coquettish little cap; and very well pleased at what she saw there, appeared not at all inclined to leave the spot.

Yet, as she stood there, she did think of Mr. Northwell, and with a little pique too, as she then called to mind their conversation. If this gentleman had one little imperfection thrown in to balance his numerous excellencies, it was an overweening family pride. According to his own account, no ancestry could have been more splendid than his; and it was really a marvel how so many other families ever contrived to obtain possession of so much wealth, since the Northwells had been represented as owning almost every place in the Union. Mr. Northwell classed among his most valuable possessions an old, stained piece of parch-

ment, carefully framed, which traced back the family of the Northwells, in the most satisfactory manner, almost to the days of Adam and Eve. Mr. Northwell had been known to catch up this precious relic on an alarm of fire, to the entire neglect of jewelry and valuables; and his wife laughingly insisted that every time he read it over, his head rose several inches higher in consequence—which must have been rather inconvenient, for he measured six feet in a tame state.

There was also a wonderful book, chiefly remarkable for being very clumsy and tedious, "The History of the Northwell Family"—the members of which were distinguished for a multiplicity of wives and children; and it really seemed as though the Northwells could join hands, like an interminable string of paper babies, and dance around the globe. This book contained some distinguished portraits of governors, and other great men, whom Mrs. Northwell pronounced "horrid old frights," and whom her husband gazed at with affectionate reverence; which was not at all lessened by the fact that his existence began long after theirs was finished.

This pride of family was Mr. Northwell's pet hobby; and his wife was often quite confounded by the grand stories he related, to which she could find no match in the annals of her own family; for they, although of a good old stock, sank into utter insignificance before the grandeur of the Northwells. And yet she thought it a little remarkable that she never saw any of these relatives, for never had man fewer than Mr. Northwell, but, as he said, nothing

could induce them to leave Rhode Island, which they considered the one inhabitable spot upon the face of the earth; and in consequence of the distance, all intercourse between them had ceased for a number of years.

But Mr. Northwell had once spoken laughingly of a visit he made these relations when a little boy; and having been brought up to entertain feelings of reverential awe for the house in which his father, and an unending string of grandfathers, had been born, he was surprised to find it a desponding-looking tenement, which stood on a sandy shore, and quite disdained the companionship of trees. At night the beating of the surge was a sound of never-ceasing gloom; by day existence was a blank. The homestead was embellished by the presence of about a dozen gigantic cousins; who dined in their shirt-sleeves, and in shaking hands really made a toil of pleasure. His wife appeared so much amused by this recital, that Mr. Northwell, rather frightened at what he had done, immediately related a story of such fearful magnificence that it almost obliterated all remembrance of the slip alluded to.

Mrs. Northwell uttered an exclamation of impatience as a servant announced that Mrs. Sanderson was in the drawing-room; and she very unwillingly descended the stairs to meet her visitor. This Mrs. Sanderson was a cousin of Mr. Northwell's, and quite as much puffed up with family pride as himself. She was an elderly lady, with no children; and had, therefore, abundance of time to devote to the concerns of her friends. Mrs. Northwell she had a particular wish to take in hand; she considered her

entirely too extravagant, too fond of company, and too much disposed to have her own way.

As Mrs. Northwell entered, she perceived, from the expression of her visitor's countenance, that something unusual was about to be divulged, and provokingly refrained from manifesting the least curiosity. Mrs. Sanderson could hold in no longer.

"Have you heard the news?" said she, at length.

"No," replied Mrs. Northwell, with a smile; "have the Dutch taken Holland?"

Without noticing the easy indifference of her hostess, Mrs. Sanderson continued, as though her words involved the welfare of the Republic: "Cousin Stacy Higginbotham and Henrietta have arrived in town!"

She glanced at her companion, expecting delight and astonishment; but Mrs. Northwell looked reflective. Higginbotham? the name seemed familiar; where had she heard it? Quite aghast, she now remembered that a Cousin Higginbotham had figured in one of her husband's grandest stories. The enemy, then, had arrived. Mechanically she listened to Mrs. Sanderson's pompous narrations.

"Mrs. Higginbotham," said she, "is very much of an invalid; she has been in close attendance on a crazy husband, who has now left her a fortune; and she has come to the city for the express purpose, she says, of finding her relations. Poor Henrietta! I feel for *her*."

Seeing that it was expected of her, Mrs. Northwell asked what particular disaster had impoverished Henrietta.

"It is a sad story," continued her visitor; "some years ago, Henrietta had a sister, older than herself, who married Arault Pepperworth. Of course you have heard of *him*. Henrietta was suspected of a preference for him; and after the wedding, she became very quiet and melancholy. After awhile the sister died—and in two years Arault Pepperworth offered himself to Henrietta. She accepted him, and seemed to become quite a different person. The wedding-clothes were all made, and the preparations for a grand wedding commenced; when Arault, who was an elder in the church, took it into his head that he ought not to marry his wife's sister. He came and told her so; and after he had gone, Henrietta quietly locked up the cake, put away her wedding-clothes, and sat down to her knitting. Arault married some one else; but, before a great while, this wife died too. He appeared now to have forgotten his scruples, for he again offered himself to Henrietta, who refused him—telling him that she was not an old glove, to be cast off and on at pleasure. A third time he committed matrimony; and his last wife has now been dead about a year. They say that Henrietta has hopes of him yet; but he appears to be very moderate, and always does things his own way."

Mrs. Northwell refrained from showing her amusement at these family relations; for her husband's eyes seemed to be looking sternly down-upon her; and she sympathized as well as she was able in the trials of Henrietta Higginbotham.

"Of course," continued the visitor, "you will wish to call upon Cousin Stacy?"

Mrs. Northwell, at first, gave a start of dissent; but then as she remembered that Mrs. Higginbotham was an invalid, and thought of the pleasure it would give her husband, she concluded to accept the invitation. Her toilet was rather more protracted than usual; for she was now about to face those terrible relatives who had haunted all her married life. At length, however, she descended; and with her pretty pink bonnet, and soft curls, looked the very personification of a Hebe. Following her visitor's advice not to take the carriage, she set out on foot to storm the enemy's quarters.

The Higginbothams had ensconced themselves with another member of the family, who was reduced to the necessity of taking boarders; and after repeated rings at the bell, the visitors were admitted by a slovenly-looking Irish girl, and ushered into a small parlor. This was one of those hopeless-looking rooms that strike dismay into the heart of an adventurer; and seating themselves on a sofa, which Mrs. Northwell asserted was stuffed with bricks, they awaited the entrance of these unknown cousins. Some time elapsed; heavy footsteps were distinctly audible overhead, and there was a constant opening and shutting of doors. The stairs creak, or, to use a figurative expression, groan beneath their burden—the door is thrown open—and enter the invalid.

Mrs. Northwell had expected to see a tall, thin lady—one who would, at least, have the decency to be pale and

interesting; but a large, stout woman entered, whom Mrs. Sanderson clasped affectionately, and introduced as Cousin Stacy. She bore a much stronger resemblance to the hostess of a country inn than a delicate invalid; and looked as though she had never experienced a day's sickness in her life. Her reception of Mrs. Northwell was patronizing, and her manner of talking very loud and pompous. Her daughter, who followed behind, looked exactly like one who had been crossed in love; and appeared very quiet and subdued. Her age might have been thirty-five. Mrs. Northwell found it impossible to draw her into conversation; and finally gave up the attempt in despair.

Mrs. Higginbotham, with an expressive roll of her eyes, said that "she loved the very name of Northwell" (she had been a Northwell herself), and spoke as though she always kept a large stock of affection on hand, to bestow upon any chance member of that fortunate family who might happen to turn up. Mrs. Northwell could scarcely suppress her smiles as she glanced at these scions of a wonderful family, and thought of her own elegant relations; she concluded that these must be importations from the homestead her husband had visited in his boyish days.

Mrs. Higginbotham had entered into a long discussion with Mrs. Sanderson upon family affairs; Henrietta was looking at and thinking of nothing, and Mrs. Northwell caught herself suppressing a yawn. For want of other occupation, she took an inventory of Henrietta's dress, and came to the conclusion that there are more becoming

things in the world than sage-colored silk, and home-made collars. Her hair was not arranged at all—it looked as though it had turned into the comb of its own accord; and the visitor could not help contrasting the mother's toilet with the daughter's. Mrs. Higginbotham, to be sure, had not displayed any very great taste in the cap of cotton lace, trimmed with a gaudy ribbon, or the dress of bright green Circassian; but it was evidently put on with some degree of care, and not, like Henrietta's, thrown upon her at random.

Mrs. Northwell was just debating upon the possibility of keeping her eyes open any longer, when her companion rose to go; and, with a sigh of ineffable relief, she gladly seconded the motion. Mrs. Higginbotham was loud in her regrets at their short stay, and sent a most affectionate message to Mr. Northwell, promising to come soon and return the visit. Henrietta said nothing, and looked less.

Once fairly seated again in her own boudoir, Mrs. Northwell indulged her risible faculties, which had been very much excited all day. Her eyes, still beaming with mirth, encountered the valued parchment, setting forth the whole genealogy of the Northwell family, and her merriment became almost uncontrollable. Her laughter still rang through the apartment when her husband entered; and the effort to control her merriment only made it worse. Catching the infection of her silvery tones, Mr. Northwell, too, laughed, as he exclaimed:

“You are really incorrigible, Ada; I suppose that, as usual, you are laughing at nothing?”

Mrs. Northwell broke forth afresh. "Nothing!" said she, "indeed! Do you call two hundred pounds nothing? for I am sure she weighed at least that. Oh, but," said she, recollecting herself, "I ought to be more grave, for I have just seen some relations of yours."

Here she went off again.

Mr. Northwell glanced at his pedigree, and braced himself up with the consciousness of his grandeur.

"Is it possible!" said he, with a grave expression of delight; "who were they? Any of Cousin Peleg Ketcheram's family, or Aunt Keziah Popperham's daughters, or perhaps some branch of Uncle Kit Gildergrass' family?"

This list of excruciating names increased Mrs. Northwell's struggle for gravity; and the gentleman paced the floor impatiently until she gasped forth Cousin Stacy Higginbotham. This was a pinnacle of grandeur to which he had scarcely raised his eyes; why, the Higginbothams were the great people of Rhode Island—the very top of the family tree! and he frowned, almost in earnest, at his wife's ludicrous description of her visit.

"Dress," said he, majestically, "is nothing—I look at the mind."

"I looked, too," replied his wife, with another outburst, "but I didn't see any thing. It was like the boy whom his father sent to Lorenzo Dow, with an intimation that his son was too much disposed to hide his talents in a napkin. 'I have shaken the napkin at every corner,' was the message that accompanied the boy's return, 'and I find that it is empty.'"

Mr. Northwell would not join in a laugh against his own family, and abruptly left the room. He also took the earliest opportunity of paying his respects to these scions of so noble a stock ; and if he were a little surprised at their external appearance, carefully refrained from making his wife the confidant of his sentiments.

Time passed on ; their visits remained unreturned, and the name of Higginbotham had almost faded from the volatile mind of Mrs. Northwell. She sat one day, in the drawing-room window, watching with some degree of interest the movements of two ladies, who appeared to be searching for some place they were unable to find. Suddenly, as their faces were turned toward her, the whole truth flashed upon her—they were *Mrs. Higginbotham* and *Henrietta* ! Her first impulse was to hide herself, and pretend that she had not seen them ; but then, with a smile at this childishness, she advanced to the door as the ladies were announced.

Mrs. Higginbotham had donned a green velvet hat, with plumes that stood up, and plumes that stood down ; and Henrietta looked, if possible, more dowdy than before. Having seated her guests, the next thing was to entertain them ; and this, as Mrs. Northwell found, was not so easily done. The mother enacted the duchess—the daughter the nonentity ; and like a school girl waiting her composition, she glanced up at the ceiling, and down at the floor, in search of inspiration ; but she found that it was like “ calling spirits from the vasty deep.”

“ But will they come when you do call for them ? ”

At length, however, Mr. Northwell came to her relief; and quietly giving up to him the task of playing the agreeable, she watched with considerable amusement his "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," which Mrs. Higginbotham received as though they were not the half of what she deserved. Mr. Northwell was apparently quite abashed by the noontide splendor of the old lady's invincible self-conceit; and coincided with every thing she said in the most deferential manner.

At length Mrs. Higginbotham rose majestically from the sofa, and Henrietta followed her example. Now came "the tug of war." First, Mrs. Higginbotham complained of a pain in her head, and sank back again; and Henrietta sank in concert. Mrs. Northwell ran for some cologne and bay-water; but when she returned, her visitor was in a hysterical state, supported by Mr. Northwell and Henrietta. Her hat and shawl were removed, and she was deposited upon the sofa, until sufficiently recovered to be moved up stairs. Her daughter did not appear to be very much alarmed; she said that her mother was subject to these attacks.

"How long do they generally last?" inquired Mrs. Northwell, somewhat anxiously.

"About a week," replied Henrietta, coolly.

"Were it not for your mother," said Mr. Northwell, politely, "I should esteem it a fortunate occurrence that has made you my guests."

His wife could not echo the sentiment. She fairly groaned as she thought of the pleasant little party she had

invited for Christmas week, now near at hand, and wished the Higginbothams at the North Pole. Henrietta took things very coolly; and Mrs. Higginbotham accepted their attentions with the air of a queen. She was established in the best bed-room, and appeared to feel very much at home. Her daughter said that no physician was necessary; all that she needed was rest and quiet. Mrs. Northwell smiled at this remark, as tray after tray, breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and tea, entered the invalid's apartment; but like the spider's victim, "never came down again." Mrs. Higginbotham said that "all that kept her up was eating—were it not for that, she did think she must sink."

The invalid required at least one servant devoted to her; and Mrs. Northwell appropriated to this service a little girl, whom she had taken more from charity than an expectation of profiting by her services; for among the many well-trained domestics, Mary was quite a superfluity. This had fostered a disposition for indolence and ease, which Mrs. Higginbotham seemed determined to eradicate; and her hostess observed, with a smile, that if she succeeded in making any thing of Mary, it would be some recompense for the Higginbotham infliction. The child flew up stairs and down like one possessed; she started at the first sound of the sick-room bell, and seemed bent on distinguishing herself in the eyes of Mrs. Higginbotham. "What a smart little thing it is!" the invalid would remark, and, like a spell, it seemed to excite the child to almost incredible feats.

Mrs. Northwell found that entertaining the Higginbothams was like receiving a sovereign; their followers gathered around them so rapidly that the elegant establishment of Walton Northwell was as much public property as the premises of a hotel. Branches of the family to the fiftieth degree clustered around its prop and stay; until Mrs. Higginbotham fairly rivaled the old woman of childish memory, who lived in a shoe. One old lady insisted upon sitting up with the invalid, and fulfilled her intention by turning Mrs. Northwell out of her boudoir, and snoring all night; another anxious friend would come and read to her—establishing herself as the Northwells' visitor at luncheon, dinner, and tea; others were constantly bringing all kinds of eatables, until the room was fairly turned into a restaurant.

Mr. Northwell was now so accustomed to encounter strange faces on the stairs, that a company of housebreakers might have carried off the valuables before his very face; he would have set them down as friends of Mrs. Higginbotham.

"I really do not see," said his wife, one evening, "what I have done to deserve this visitation—I am sure I have not been very wicked lately. By-the-by, my dear," she continued, with a most mischievous look, "how pleasant it must be for you to have all your family relations collected about you—so very refreshing—particularly those whom you have never seen till now. But I haven't that to keep me up, and I feel rather tired."

At first, Mr. Northwell pretended to shake his provok-

ing little wife; but as she only laughed, he was obliged to do the same, and even acknowledge himself weary of this continuation of favors.

"I wonder," said he, "when Mrs. Higginbotham intends to be well? I hope she does not mean to play invalid here for the rest of her life. But my dear Ada," he added, with a twinge of conscience, "they really do belong to a most splendid family, old Governor Frettlebrewer."

But Mrs. Northwell had danced off; the governor's ghost had been so often raised to terrify her into a proper appreciation of his grandeur, that it had lost its effect and degenerated into a bore. She turned toward the sick-room.

"Henrietta," said the invalid, just as she entered, "Christmas week is very pleasant in the city, and these Northwells are rather good sort of people."

The entrance of their hostess prevented the damsel's reply; but Mrs. Northwell, who believed that a change, even for the worse, was agreeable, resolved instantly to import two little nephews, who were always taken with the scarlet fever, whooping-cough, or measles when out visiting—a cousin, who played on the piano all day, and sat up at night to practice new tunes—and a young married couple, who never traveled without a baby, that appeared to think it had been sent into the world for the express purpose of screaming all the time. If this addition did not storm them forth, she would, in despair, apply the torch to the premises with her own hand.

The very next day, to her great surprise, these worthies all dropped in one after the other, without having been

sent for at all. Mrs. Northwell, as usual, began to laugh—her husband looked rather blank—and the Higginbotham frigate showed signs of moving with all on board. In course of time they actually departed; and Mrs. Higginbotham's adieus were made as though she had conferred a great favor on the Northwells. So she had by leaving. Mary, the little handmaid, lingered in the hall, till the last expecting some acknowledgment of her services; and Mrs. Higginbotham, at length roused to a remembrance of her duty, turned toward her.

"Mary," said she, imposingly, "you are a very sweet girl (how Mary trembled), and I hope, child, that, when you are old enough, you will get a good husband."

Mrs. Northwell suddenly forced her pocket-handkerchief into her mouth, and even her husband turned aside; while Mrs. Higginbotham sailed majestically on to the carriage, in the delightful consciousness of having acquitted herself to her own satisfaction.

Mrs. Northwell had felt almost as much burdened as though Mrs. Higginbotham's substantial proportions had rested on her; but she now went about with a light heart, in spite of the sick little boys, the musical young lady, and the screaming baby. These were only temporaries; but she had begun to fear that Mrs. Higginbotham might prove a permanency. All things have an end, and so did these troubles; the Christmas party passed off as delightfully as could be desired; and Mrs. Northwell had made an express stipulation with her husband that the name of Higginbotham should be a forbidden sound.

Some are born to greatness, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them ; whether the Northwells had claims to the two former, the latter saying, at least, seemed verified in their case. In the spring Mrs. Northwell received a long letter from Mrs. Sanderson : which was, to her great surprise, dated " Old Wildfire," the family seat, and which began :

" Of course you will be delighted to hear of the happiness of our dear Henrietta, who is about to marry Arault Pepperworth. Henrietta's nature is pensive and interesting ; while that of Mr. Pepperworth being more fitted to struggle with the world, they make an uncommonly well-matched couple. Mrs. Higginbotham has desired me to express the pleasure your presence, and that of Mr. Northwell, on the occasion, would give her ; and she hopes that, on the receipt of this, you will immediately set out for Old Wildfire."

" What is the matter, Ada ?" asked Mr. Northwell, a little impatiently ; for it is provoking to see a person laughing immoderately, when you are entirely ignorant of the cause.

" '*Happiness of our dear Henrietta!*' Which happiness," she continued, " consists in her becoming *the fourth wife of her first love!* Oh, ye good women of old ! there's patience and constancy for you, and meek endurance !"

Mr. Northwell took the letter, which she had dropped in her excitement, and after reading it he sat a few moments thinking.

"Ada," said he, rather hesitatingly, "what do you think of accepting this invitation?"

"Oh, I should like it of all things!" she exclaimed, her eyes fairly dancing. "We shall then see the whole menagerie at once!"

Her husband looked rather disconcerted; some fragments from the wreck of his family grandeur were still floating about in the ocean of his mind.

"Now," said his wife, laughing, "what is the use of trying to keep up this farce any longer? I belong now to the initiated—and my one peep behind the scenes has caused me, like *Oliver Twist*, to 'ask for more.' I want to see Uncle Kit Gildergrass."

Mr. Northwell pronounced her incorrigible; but she had been so often told this that she did not mind it in the least.

Well, one morning two travelers set forth on a journey; and after traveling "on, and on, and on," as the fairy tales say, they came at last to Old Wildfire; which they found as quiet-looking a place as could be imagined. The description of Mr. Pepperworth's character they found perfectly correct; he was indeed perpetually "struggling," and seemed ready to quarrel with any one whom he could draw into a dispute. His appearance scarcely warranted the strength and endurance of Henrietta's affection; but it quite spoiled the simile of comparing it to the ivy, since it had not clung around a ruin, for Mr. Pepperworth appeared to be in full possession of all his faculties. The preparations for eating were conducted on so extensive a

scale, that the Northwells wondered if an invasion of Goths or Vandals were expected.

Aunt Keziah Popperham entered; and Mr. Northwell gazed with surprise on his father's first love—an immense woman, with a gigantic family of sons and daughters.

Cousin Peleg Ketcheram was a widower, engaged for the fifth time; and he was evidently considered quite a beau—for even widowers were scarce, and invariably engaged. As to a young man, such an article would have excited as much surprise as any of Barnum's curiosities. They all seemed to be born married.

Uncle Kit Gildergrass was a good-natured old man, who claimed relationship with every body, and somewhat startled Mrs. Northwell by giving her a hearty kiss. This seemed to be a way he had; and all took it quietly. A bouncing school girl deposited herself on his lap; "La, she was sure she didn't mind Uncle Gildergrass!"—staid spinsters received his salutes with a "Nobody cared for Uncle Gildergrass!" but Mrs. Northwell, toward whom he appeared irresistibly attracted by her youth and beauty, considered him a dangerous companion, and begged her husband to "keep her out of the clutches of that horrid old man!"

There *was* a young gentleman, too—engaged of course; and looking so very sheepish and conscious, that he reminded one forcibly of Bell in "The Inheritance," with her "a person in *my* situation." This was young Grubb Springbottom—his father was "old Grubb."

As each one in succession was mentioned, Mrs. Northwell would glance at her husband with a peculiar look, which had the effect of turning his eyes another way ; but she whispered,

“This reminds me exactly of a very old novel I once read, called ‘Cherubina ;’ in which the heroine, a crazy romantic individual, sets forth to discover the characters she has read of, that are as familiar as household words. At a ball some one points out to her the characters in ‘The Children of the Abbey,’ and other books ; when she finds ‘Amanda’ a great, stout woman, with the air of a grenadier—‘Lady Euphrasia, an old maid of fifty, and others to correspond.”

Mr. Northwell looked rather disappointed himself ; and began to view things in a different light. The ceremony was concluded ; and Henrietta Higginbotham was converted into a Pepperworth. Uncle Gildergrass commenced with the bride, and kissed every one in the room—Mrs. Higginbotham not excepted ; relatives flocked around to offer their congratulations ; and one spinster faltered, “may you be happy !” with such visible agitation, that Mrs. Northwell concluded she must be a disappointed lover of Arault Pepperworth’s. That too fascinating man bore off his interesting bride to the carriage that awaited them ; and the guests departed.

Now that the Keziah Popperhams, the Kit Gildergrasses, and the Peleg Ketcherams had been stripped of their fancy trappings, and brought down to plain realities, Mr. Northwell felt that his family grandeur was like an

oil painting—a picture that looked best at a distance. On his return, he manifested decided symptoms of indifference toward the framed parchment; and Mrs. Northwell one day found the hitherto-cherished relic in the garret, with its face ignominiously turned to the wall.

THE WIFE'S REVENGE.

IT was an autumn evening in 18—, and all the beauty and fashion of New York were gathered within the walls of the old Park theater, which is now numbered with the things that have been. All who were then present were full of excitement and expectation, and impressed with the idea that it was one of the most important eras in their lives; and yet the very same scene has been enacted both before and since; the same hopes, disappointments, and jealousies have accompanied each separate time. There was the same blaze of light from sparkling chandeliers—the same cagerly-watched stage, with its brilliant foot-lights, pleasant associations, and envious curtain, that yet concealed the expected enjoyment from view—the same white arm leaning in an attitude of such careless consciousness on the red velvet cushions—the same flash of diamonds, waving of plumes, and bowing of turbaned heads—the same bright eyes and dazzling teeth that had graced a similar scene. There sits a bright coquette, surrounded by beaux and dangles, bestowing a smile on one,

a sally on another, and a nod to a third—then glancing at her own white arm, on which other eyes also rested; but they, alas! admired the diamond bracelet which clasped its rounded beauties, and thought of the gold, in solid bank-stock, which formed a glorious setting to the beautiful picture; and impudent-looking men level their opera-glasses at all whom they consider worthy of observation—the looked-at party sitting quite patient and resigned under their pertinacious staring.

Seats had been engaged for this important evening weeks beforehand; every body who was any body put forth every effort to obtain admission to this last representation of the great English actress, prior to her departure for her native land. The curtain seemed an endless time in rising; and while some sat sullen and impatient, others amused themselves with observations on those around them. Two gentlemen, who were seated in a box that commanded a good view of the house, were earnestly engaged in conversation; their glasses, meanwhile, being in active employment; and one appeared to be enlightening the other as to the character and position of those who, from time to time, attracted his attention.

“Who is that lovely, ethereal-looking little creature? A perfect representation of a Peri! with those golden tresses, and that sweet, innocent expression—I have been observing her this half hour. Ah! you smile—your great heiress, Miss Ivers, I conclude?”

“Not at all, my dear fellow—you never were more mistaken in your life. Ella Colman is, I acknowledge,

perfectly charming—beautiful as an opening rose-bud—pure-minded as an angel—and *poor* as a church mouse.”

The opera-glass was instantly withdrawn.

“Do tell me who that bold-looking creature is with the great black eyes, and mouth that seems ready to express the scorn traced in her whole countenance? Upon my word! if she has not just boxed that fellow’s ears! and in no gentle manner, either—the termagant!”

“That,” said his friend, with a peculiar smile, “is Miss Ivers, the heiress.”

A single look of surprise—one uttered exclamation—and the opera-glass was again leveled in that direction. And an artist, whose name is *Gold*, stood at his side and reflected her portrait. A soft light came into her eyes, a gentle, loving smile played about the coarse mouth—and the deceitful painter held up an image of all that was beautiful. He was a fortune-hunter—she a fortune; and in six months they were married.

Their attention was soon after drawn toward a private box on the stage, the curtains of which had hitherto concealed the inmates from their view; but the drapery was now pushed aside—a delicate hand, sparkling with jewels, rested on the front cushion—and a beautiful woman, apparently about twenty-five, leaned forward upon the seat. She was very lovely, with those high, proud features—the dark, shining hair, amid which sparkled a bandeau of diamonds—and those wonderful eyes, that one moment wore the expression of the startled fawn; the next, were flashing about with haughty brilliancy. The instant she ap-

peared every glass in the house seemed directed toward her; and the stranger gazed in a state of complete fascination—amusing his calmer friend with his raptures.

“If that were but Miss Ivers!” he sighed; “but who, in the name of all that’s beautiful, is she?”

“Mrs. Duncan Clavers,” was the reply; “the most beautiful, wealthy, and miserable woman in the city of New York.”

“‘Beautiful, wealthy, and *miserable!*’” ejaculated his interrogator; “rather curious causes of misery, I should conclude.”

Too much occupied in drinking in her beauty to pursue the conversation further, he sat rapt in silent contemplation. The lady endured the gaze of the assembly with the utmost stoicism; she sat leaning her head upon one white hand, that gleamed out like a snow-flake from the red velvet cushions, and appeared occupied with other thoughts. Drawing forward a beautiful little girl of four years, she placed her on the seat beside her, and employed herself in talking to and caressing her. The child was dressed in a style of magnificence that corresponded with the mother’s attire; and jewels sparkled on the dimpled arms, and were linked about the plump white neck. Pleased with the light, the splendor, and her own unusual dress, the child’s face was beaming with rapture; but the lady started suddenly back, while her brow contracted as with pain—for the little girl, in one sweet whisper, had placed a sharp arrow in her heart. Those around noticed the sudden spasm that shook her frame, and wondered at

it; but could those infant tones have reached them, they would no longer have marveled.

“Mamma!” said the child, softly, “am I in heaven?”

The little girl’s innocent heart contained but one idea of loveliness; all that was pleasant and beautiful approached nearer, in her view, to the better land; and as she gazed around her head grew dizzy, and she thought that no place, except paradise, could be half so brilliant. The mother had shrunk hastily from the child, as though fearful of tainting her purity; and bitter were the thoughts that rose within her, as she sat in the shaded corner, involuntarily dwelling on the difference between that holy place, and the one to which she had brought her innocent child.

But other reflections came and curved the beautiful lip with a smile of contempt; she glanced for an instant toward the opposite box, and as she observed the entrance of a gentleman, she resumed her former position, apparently rapt up in the little girl. Many gazed with interest on that strange picture in a play-house—a young and beautiful woman seated alone with her child, and apparently unconscious of the tribute offered to her loveliness. It seemed as though she had fallen, unharmed, into the midst of folly and wickedness, secure in the protection of the angel at her side.

The curtain at length rose up amid thunders of applause, and the queen of the night appeared, more beautiful than ever. The play was “The Stranger;” and while all were warmed into enthusiasm, or melted to tears by the representation, Mrs. Clavers sat motionless as a mar-

ble statue. The cheek flushed and paled alternately, but not a tear came into the beautiful eyes; she did not move her position, but sat with one hand unconsciously grasping the cushion before her. She leaned forward in an attitude of the most absorbed attention.

“ With eyes upraised, and lips apart,
Like monuments of Grecian art.”

The fair hand quivered, as though with suppressed emotion, and her eyes seemed riveted upon the stage by a strange fascination.

Suddenly her head drooped—the bright color left her cheek—and sinking back upon the cushions, she fainted. Her position had been too conspicuous not to have attracted the attention of the whole assembly; and as she sank languidly back, several started from their seats, and rushed to her assistance. There was now a pause between the acts; the star had for the present retired, and the beautiful Mrs. Clavers became the object of undivided attention.

But the gentleman whose entrance had roused her from her reverie, hastily entered the box, and pushing the others aside with the air of one who had a superior right, he soon revived his insensible wife with a glass of water which had been immediately procured. Mr. Clavers had the greatest dread of making a *scene*; as soon, therefore, as the lady opened her drooping eyes, he asked her questions, in a tone evidently meant to be answered in the affirmative, as to whether her fainting had not been caused by the heat, the excitement, etc. She languidly assented; and the crowd who had gathered around returned to their seats

quite satisfied ; and Mrs. Clavers having expressed her intention of remaining till the end of the representation, her husband seated himself beside her, and appeared to watch her every motion.

None had been more favored in their offers of assistance than the two friends ; both simultaneously rushed from their seats—and when they again returned to their old position, the informant was immediately assailed with a host of questions.

“ Well,” he replied, “ as to the first inquiry : ‘ who was the rather mature, extremely stiff, and very disagreeable-looking gentleman who pushed us aside with such a dignified air,’ I answer that he is the lady’s husband.”

“ *Her husband !*” ejaculated the other, “ I thought he might be her *father !*”

“ No,” returned his companion, calmly, “ you thought no such thing. You mean that he is old enough to be, but the looks with which he regarded her were any thing but fatherly. His lordship was in a towering passion ; she had created ‘ a scene,’ and no act can be more inexcusable in his eyes. As to why she married him, that must remain a mystery—I can discover nothing to account for it. He is immensely rich, to be sure, but so she expected to be at the time she married him. He married *her* for her money—of that there can be no manner of doubt ; and when he found that a brother had inherited the whole, beyond a paltry thousand a year, all of which he scrupulously gives her, his disappointment showed itself in a settled indifference. She is the most splendidly dressed woman in New

York; the contents of her jewel-box are said to be inexhaustible; and yet there is a queer story afloat about her always being scant of money. She has all that money can procure, and yet she is often in want of a few dollars. I have often heard of her borrowing various sums; and her carriage has even been seen at the door of a shirt warehouse, while a footman handed in a large bundle, which was received by a lady deeply veiled. There is a mystery under the whole affair; Duncan Clavers has the reputation of being a mean man, and yet look at his wife's dress, and the child's! Whether she ever really loved him I do not know; it seems almost impossible, when you consider the difference in their ages, and yet for what else could she have married him? They have a separate carriage, a separate box at the theater, a separate interest in every thing; the only link between them is that little girl, their only child, except that he constantly reminds her of bearing his name—at the same time expressing a hope that she will never so far forget herself as to commit any act derogatory to its dignity. Partly, perhaps, to spite him, partly to gratify her own feelings, she has formed a great intimacy with the talented actress who to-night takes her leave of us. She has no intimate friends; Americans, you know, do not regard actresses in the flattering light in which they are viewed in the old country; talented or not, the fact of their *being* actresses calls forth very aristocratic notions on the part of their patrons here; and although willing enough to be amused by them, and pay for that amusement, they shrink back behind the

intrenchment of their pride and dignity at the very idea of making companions of them. Mrs. Duncan Clavers is an independent, brave woman. Shielding herself with the consciousness of her own position and importance, she has ventured to break through all these established forms, and select as her bosom-friend an English actress—one whose nightly business it is to amuse other people. This has not operated favorably on her popularity; she is admired, envied, and rather shunned by those to whom she is known as the beautiful Mrs. Clavers, the *chère amie* of Mrs. ——. Her husband, of course, does not like this; it interferes most sadly with his pride, but he can not prevent it; and he has no right to complain, for he sets her the example himself. He is quite as ardent an admirer of actresses as his wife; and almost every night, when there is not any thing absolutely humdrum, you see the two occupying the self-same seats they had at first. But my throat feels quite husky now with so much talking, and there goes the curtain."

The representation was drawing to a close; the actress was more charming than she had ever been before; and while she cried most beautifully with the help of onions concealed in her handkerchief, real tears of unaffected sympathy were rolling down the cheeks of her audience at this tale of ideal woe. The stage was covered with a carpet of flowers—bouquets came flying from all quarters of the house—and as the fictitious Mrs. Haller stood for a moment just below the Clavers' box, the little girl leaned forward, and dropped a splendid wreath with such grace-

ful effect, that it fell directly on the head of the actress. The father did not appear to relish this display, and drew the child back, but not before the act had been accomplished; and the thunders of applause that followed were partly bestowed on the little cherub, whose bright face had been seen for a moment, like a fairy amid the flowers.

It was concluded; the actress had advanced to the foot-lights, courtesied her adieus, made a short speech expressive of her gratitude and sorrow at leaving them—and the curtain fell amid acclamations that shook the whole house.

Duncan Clavers, with an air of the greatest deference, arranged his wife's white cashmere cloak—at the same time whispering to her not to make a fool of herself again, as he saw her trembling, and her cheek turn pale; and leading the now weary child, they left the box together. Mrs. Clavers, despite his opposition, would insist upon bidding her friend a private farewell; and was proceeding to the dressing-room with the child, but the husband, taking the little girl in his arms, said sternly—

“Leave the child with me. We will await your return here.”

A sudden shudder came over her, and she leaned against the pillar for support. With trembling steps she proceeded at length to the actress' apartment, and entered the room in a state of hysterical agitation.

She never returned.

Duncan Clavers stood with the sleeping child in his arms, and waited in vain for the interview to be ended. At last, weary and angry, he went behind the stage to

seek his wife. The men were putting out the lights—the rooms were in a state of disorder, and quite deserted. He sat down for a few moments, quiet and composed ; as he glanced about, his eye fell upon a note directed to himself—it was in his wife's handwriting—and securing it in one of his pockets, he bore his daughter to the carriage, and returned to his deserted home.

We must now glance back through many years; from the meridian of life to innocent boyhood—a long and weary travel. It is a cold, snapping winter's evening, and our destination is that snug-looking farm-house, that in summer seems to have fallen so sweetly asleep among the shady trees that surround it. The sitting-room is the very picture of neatness and comfort; the striped carpet on the floor is all of home-manufacture—the brass candlesticks are as bright as hands can make them—the roaring logs in the huge fire-place send forth bright clouds of flame; and around the plain, baize-covered table are gathered happy faces, that would laugh merrily if you told them of damask curtains, and rose-wood chairs, and marble tables, and pier-glasses. The only article for the gratification of vanity is the little mahogany-framed glass that hangs between the windows, decorated with Christmas greens; they make their mirrors of each other's eyes, which reflect only kindness.

Just before the fire sits the farmer; his boots pulled off, his feet resting on the mantel—deeply absorbed in the

amusing occupation of twirling his thumbs. His hair is quite gray ; and so is his wife's, the mild-looking woman who is piecing carpet-rags with an air of the most active industry. The fair-haired girl, who sits there knitting, while she from time to time exchanges a smile with the young student at his books, is their daughter—the child of their old age—the left of many taken ; and the love with which they regard her is tempered with fear, as they gaze on her fragile appearance, lest she, too, should go and leave them desolate.

The dark-haired boy at his studies is handsome, and manly-looking, and yet, somehow or other, his is a face which you do not like ; there is something peculiar in it—an expression not met with at his age. Look again—have you not seen him before ? Surely it is not Duncan Clavers ! The very same ; you saw him last when time had taken away those rounded lines, and brought out into stronger relief the expression which is there faintly shadowed forth. Yes, that is Duncan Clavers, the orphan boy who has his own way to carve out in the world. He has one rich relation, who is willing to set him agoing ; if he succeeds, the rich relation will reward him with his smiles and approval—if he falls, he will push him down still lower. Young as he is, there is a firm resolution embedded in his mind ; he *will* succeed—he *will* become a rich man—he *will* raise his name from its obscurity. He is now preparing for college ; and if daily and nightly toil, if a firm concentration of mind upon the one point in view can bring success, he is sure to have it.

The Wincots, good, hospitable people! have taken him in at a marvelously low board; they have no son of their own, so they care for him as tenderly as though he bore to them that relation; they are as proud of his talents, as much elated with his success, and depressed at his disappointments. Annie Wincot regards him as a combination of all the talents, virtues, and charms ever separately bestowed on erring human mortals; and he considers her a quiet little girl, with a sweet face, and sunny temper, who will make him a nice wife some of these days—if he has time to think of such things.

The old pair are watching them to-night with very much the same thoughts; it is the first time they ever entertained the idea, and as the husband glances from them to his wife she perceives how his thoughts are employed. They both felt very happy; it was what they should desire of all things—and they fell into a reverie on the future. Of course they were too young yet—it would not be for many years; but they concluded that Annie must still live at home, and Duncan could go to the city every day, and return to the farm-house at night. And so the good, simple people sat and dreamed; they did not think of *gold* coming between them and their happiness; they supposed that Duncan would become rich and great, and yet remain the same as ever.

Often in after years that humble room, with its loving faces and glowing warmth, rose up before the man of the world; but never so vividly as he remembered it on this particular evening.

Annie left her knitting and glided around to her mother ; then she approached Duncan, and twining her arm about his neck, she glanced into his face with a sweet, winning smile, and begged him to lay aside his tiresome books. He pleaded the length of his tasks ; but deliberately closing the volumes, she took them up and carried them into the entry. Resolving to make up the lost time when the others were buried in slumber, he suffered her to do as she pleased with them ; and seeing him thus emerge from his clouds, the farmer turned around from the fire, Mrs. Wincot put aside her carpet-rags, and all entered into an animated conversation. Some of Annie's doughnuts, and one of Mrs. Wincot's famous mince-pies rapidly disappeared ; and at last the time came for retiring.

All departed for bed except the young student, whose candle was burning far past midnight, as he perseveringly applied himself to the dry volumes before him.

Years passed. Duncan Clavers entered college ; he had told Annie of his love—she had blushingly confessed hers ; and the farmer and his wife were well pleased at the prospect of seeing their two children united.

Annie wore a ring on one of her slender fingers which was never taken off ; and a lock of her bright hair rested against the heart of Duncan Clavers. She had the ring—he still treasured her keepsake ; what need then had her silly little heart to imagine that there was less love in his letters, in his *tone* than formerly ? She could not understand the employments that were pressing around him ; some of these days he would think only of her—what right

then had she to complain? Nevertheless, in the solitude of her own little room she often wept bitter tears; his letters *were* cold—his tone she might forget, or imagine warm as formerly, but there lay the words before her—she could not mistake *them*, and they cost her hours of bitter regret and dark foreboding.

Duncan Clavers came now and then to the scene of his school-boy days; old Mr. and Mrs. Wincot were as kind as ever, and Annie looked as sweet, if not as smiling, as formerly, and when there his heart yearned toward them all. But he went back to college; he saw his rich relation, and told him of his love; the two were a long time together in the stately library—and when they came forth, Duncan Clavers' face was as pale as death, but it was firm. Which would he sacrifice; his love or his ambition? *Gold* added another triumph to its already countless lists; and that very evening he wrote a letter to Annie which he knew would be her death-blow, and yet his hand scarcely trembled. It was placed in her hands; when she had read it twice to be sure of its contents, she spoke not, but glided up to her room and sank upon the couch. She lay there a few weeks; and then her pure spirit winged its way to its eternal abode.

The heavy tramp of men upon the stairs, as they carried down the coffin and placed it in the best parlor, grated harshly on the ears of the two desolate old people; there was a crowd of friends in the little room—an impassioned prayer by the aged minister—a last look at the cold, still features of the loved one—and all was over.

They never reproached him, either with their presence or by note; they knew that it would have no good influence, and so they brooded over their sorrow in silence. And yet a figure often rose up accusingly before him; sometimes at twilight, when he sat and mused alone—sometimes in the still midnight hour; and as he drove home alone on that autumn night, his heart whispered, “Annie! thou art now avenged.”

His rich relation died; and true to the agreement entered into between them on that night in the library, he left his fortune to Duncan Clavers; who now found himself, while still in his youth, almost at the summit of all he had ever dared to aspire to. But with his wealth increased his wishes—he was not yet satisfied; his grasping soul sought greater riches; and he invested his money in various speculations. A singular fortune attended every effort; his ships were never wrecked by disastrous winds; he never met with dishonest agents; all his merchandize came safe to hand; and his wealth multiplied almost beyond calculation. His youth had passed in mercenary projects, and the autumn of life was drawing on apace. He had never married; many beautiful eyes had darted bright glances at the wealthy bachelor—many ruby lips had wreathed with smiles at his approach—but still he remained single. Had the truth been told, they could hardly have credited it: that the Croesus of the community would ever make his marriage a matter of traffic—that he could not entertain such views but with the certainty of gain; yet so it was. He grew harder and harder, and colder and

colder; and all good impulses seemed choked up forever.

We must now present the man of gold in his second love—if such it can be called. - He was very handsome, very gentlemanly, and very agreeable; his thin lips, perhaps, expressed too much the habit of calculation—but he bore his age well, and nature had given him features that made him look far more noble-minded than he really was.

Minna Clarke was a beautiful creature. Accustomed from childhood to have every look gratified—brought up in the midst of wealth and luxury—and quite spoilt by her father and brother, who almost idolized the motherless girl, she became capricious, and could only be satisfied with something out of the common way. Lovers she had in plenty; the attentions of these she ascribed to their proper source—her father's wealth—and gave each successive applicant a summary dismissal.

At length she met with Duncan Clavers. His style interested her; he was no longer young, but he was fine-looking and dignified; his appearance was very different from that of the butterflies by whom she had hitherto been assailed; and when he spoke words of love, and assumed the humble position of a suitor, her vanity was more flattered than it had ever been by the attentions of any other suitor. His own wealth prevented him from seeking her for her money—Mrs. Duncan Clavers sounded

well—she supposed she must one day marry somebody and why not him ? Then again, his age, instead of being an obstacle, was quite an advantage ; he would be proud of her youth and beauty, and anxious to display it everywhere—in place of a humdrum husband, she would have a devoted escort.

Mr. Clarke, however, was very much surprised by the proposals of Duncan Clavers ; he could scarcely believe that his petted, fastidious daughter had placed her affections on a man old enough to be her father ; of course money could be no object to *her* ; and Minna received a summons to his presence, in order to explain the mystery.

“Minna,” said the father, “do you really love Mr. Clavers ?”

“Yes, papa,” replied his daughter, with a charming frankness.

“But consider the difference in your age,” he remonstrated. “He will be an old man when you are still a young woman.”

“Very true, papa,” she replied, with a merry smile, “but it is better, you know, to be an old man’s darling than a young man’s slave.”

Mr. Clarke shook his head—he scarcely knew what to make of it ; but concluding that her wishes were most important in such a case, he continued—

“Well, Minna, this is a curious affair—very. Shall I write an assent to Mr. Clavers ?”

“If you please, papa,” and she glided from the room.

She became the wife of Duncan Clavers ; and for a short

time her fancies were realized. He was flattered by the love with which she evidently regarded him, proud of her loveliness, and held somewhat in awe by the expected wealth which would one day be hers. He was the most devoted of husbands; and Mr. Clarke saw with surprise that his Minna was, if possible, more merry and happier than ever.

A short time after the birth of their child her father died; and Duncan Clavers attended the funeral with a demeanor of the most perfect propriety. The silver-ornamented coffin had been borne to the family vault; the undertaker's men cleared the hall of their implements; and a party assembled in the library to hear the will read.

It was long and tedious; but Duncan Clavers at length comprehended that the whole property descended to the son, with the exception of a paltry thousand a year! There was one passage relating to his daughter, in which he spoke of her being so well provided for, that he had concluded to keep the estate in the family.

Minna cared nothing about it; rejoicing in her brother's good fortune, she quite approved her father's last wishes, and supposed that her husband's sentiments were the same; but it was not long before she became aware of his real feelings. The devoted lover quickly sank into the indifferent husband; her freedom was destroyed, her every motion watched, and at first she could scarcely believe that this was the effect of his disappointment. She had then met with the fate she most dreaded: *he had married her for her money!* She had really loved him; but this

soon gave place to anger, when she found that he did not consider her beauty and attractions a sufficient balance for his paltry gold. From the very depths of her heart she hated him; she saw through his character at last; saw the meanness, and duplicity, and selfishness, which he had so carefully concealed; and wept bitterly over her unfortunate marriage. But tears came too late—her fate was irrevocably settled; and she found herself chained to a man whom she despised and loathed.

Duncan Clavers was a mean man; with a property whose income alone would have been quite a fortune, he was yet as watchful in trifles as though just beginning the world. He was ambitious, though, of people's esteem; he preferred keeping his meanness to himself; and none who saw his wife's splendid dress could imagine that she ever felt the want of money. But he meant that she should, as a punishment for his being so deceived; he suspected, now, that she had married him for his wealth—that the disposition of her father's property had been a privy agreement, to which she was accessory; and he determined that she should not profit much by it. The thousand a year which had been left her he gave her, to be sure, but it was expended for her; costly things, for which she did not care, were constantly purchased, while trifles, not half the amount, were denied. She had no purse separate from her husband's; she was obliged to go to him for every thing; and the angry blood often mounted to her very brow as he demanded an account of how every dollar was to be spent. Unknown to him, she pro-

cured work from shops; and sat toiling as diligently as the poorest seamstress, rather than suffer this galling bondage.

But he was a torment to her in every way; he interfered with the child, disarranged all her plans, and sought to win its entire love. The little thing, quite unconscious that she was an object of jealousy, prattled sweetly to both; but her beautiful mamma was almost adored—and the father saw, with dark and angry feelings, that in any trifling question of supremacy the mother was always preferred.

They had now been married five years; Mrs. Duncan Clavers was even more beautiful than Minna Clarke had been; she had wealth, beauty, and admiration—and yet she was miserable. Her indignation at being thus considered worthless and unattractive without her expected fortune—slighted by the man on whom she had bestowed the warmth and frankness of a *first love*—gave birth to an intense desire for revenge; a resolution to pay back all the scorn, and contempt, and indignity which had been heaped upon her. She had few friends; the heartless devotees of fashion who bowed to the husband's wealth suited her not; and yet she must have excitement—she could not live without something to destroy the constant remembrance of her injuries—and she became a regular attendant at the theater. Almost every night that beautiful face looked forth from the curtains of a stage-box; and she became interested in the ideal scenes that were represented before her.

She met the actress, Mrs. —, at the house of an acquaintance; she admired her talents, her invincible spirit, and agreeable manners; and in a short time they were firm friends. She could no longer keep her troubles to her own bosom; she wanted sympathy, advice; and her actress friend became her confidant. Her story was received with the greatest indignation; from time to time various hints were thrown out; and at length the wife resolved to leave her husband and her home. Mrs. — knew that with her youth, beauty, and distinguished appearance, she must succeed upon the stage; she wished to have the pleasure of bringing out a star—in addition to feeling a strong sympathy for the beautiful young creature; and the plan had been so long talked over between them, that it now appeared quite reasonable.

What did Mrs. Clavers care for public opinion? She had not a friend she regretted to leave, or whose feelings she valued in the least; it would wound her husband in the tenderest point—by exposing him to public comment and conjectures, she would take a deep and lasting revenge. Nor was this all; he idolized the child, and she could not live without it; it was her intention to take the little girl with her, and for this purpose she had brought her to the theater on the night of her flight; he would not, perhaps, care for *her* departure, except as it exposed him to ridicule—but to leave him entirely desolate would indeed be a triumph. This it was which had blanched her cheek, and caused her to lean heavily against the pillar; she saw that she must leave *her child*

behind; and she appeared before her friend almost irresolute.

"Come," said Mrs. —, as she stood muffled in her wrapper, "I have been waiting for you. To-morrow, you know, carries you far beyond these hateful shores."

"I can not, can not go!" sobbed her trembling companion, "my child! my child!"

The actress comprehended in a moment the state of the case; and drawing Minna further inside the room, she said, in a low tone:

"Listen to me—and I can tell you something that will, perhaps, comfort you. It is for the child's good that your plans have been thus disarranged; she can be far better attended to under her father's protection, and lead a much happier life than were she to accompany you about from place to place. He idolizes her, so that there is no fear of her not being tenderly treated; and besides, reflect what a much deeper wound you inflict upon the man by taking her from him at some future time, when he has educated and watched over her from childhood to girlhood. When your fame is fairly established, as it will, it *must* be, when you have a home, and wealth to support her, you can lure her from her father—teach her to supply your place in the admiration of the public—and his punishment will be complete."

Mrs. Clavers was at length persuaded by the eloquence of her friend; and although her tears flowed thick and fast for the child whom she might never again behold, she suffered herself to be led to the carriage. The next day

they left the shores of America; and after a short and pleasant passage the white cliffs of Albion gleamed upon their view.

Duncan Clavers laid his sleeping child in her little crib, kissed her blooming cheek, and lingered as though loath to leave her. Dark, angry, and tumultuous were his feelings, as he reflected that the mother of that child had brought down shame and censure on its innocent head—had exposed him to scorn and revilings—had forfeited her own good name in public estimation. A sudden movement reminded him of the letter; he drew it forth, and read with an expression of contempt:

“Your own shameful and unmanly conduct has driven me from a home which I no longer regard as mine. You married *the heiress*, and the portionless wife was soon made to feel that she had no right to the love which had been bestowed upon her rival. I can even read your feelings at this moment; you do not regret your wife’s absence—you are trembling lest your cherished *honor* should suffer! Make yourself quite easy on that point, little as you deserve the comfort; for my own sake I shall strictly preserve the good name which has never yet been tarnished. The companion of my flight is a woman; I have gone off with no solicitous lover—although, could I so far forget what was due to myself, your conduct has been sufficient to drive me to it.”

Duncan Clavers read this epistle to the end; a peculiar

smile curled his lip as he proceeded, and when he had finished it, he calmly tore it into fragments and laid them on the fire. He did not believe one word of it. He was convinced that his wife had married him for his wealth; and that she had since become fascinated by the attractions of some younger lover. The actress had been a party to the elopement, and the pair had probably fled to England to elude pursuit.

All that night he sat up—keeping a lonely vigil in his library. Pictures of his early days, the face of Annie Wincot, and the purity of his early love, rose up before him. His hands were clinched, his face deeply marked with conflicting passions, and his whole frame shook with violent emotion. The morning rays still found him there; a servant would enter in a few moments to dust the furniture; and shrinking from the eyes of prying curiosity, he went softly up to his apartment and threw himself on the couch.

The world soon knew the flight of the beautiful Mrs. Clavers. Some loudly blamed her proceedings, and sided with the husband; while others declared that she was quite right in leaving him if he did not treat her well—they only wondered who she could have gone off with, as no body was missed. But Duncan Clavers was determined to put down public surmises; he did not seclude himself from people's gaze—he appeared the same as before, and allowed no change to be visible. He was still important and influential; his wife's desertion had not affected his property; and the circle of his adherents continued unbroken.

But his daughter? That was the trouble; in that place the mortification was most keenly felt; and he determined to seclude her entirely, at least till the report should have worn itself out—and not suffer her spirit to be crushed by the taunts leveled at her in consequence of her mother's misconduct. Nothing that money could procure was denied her; the nursery was filled with rare and expensive toys; but she had no playmate—no companions except her father and nurse; and so she grew up a beautiful, graceful child, ignorant of the bright world from which she was excluded. She was ten years old before Duncan Clavers thought of sending her from him. The pain of parting, however, was balanced by the advantages she would derive; and, for the first time in her life, the little Minna found herself the inmate of a boarding-school many miles from home, and surrounded by none but strange faces.

Before long, though, tones and words of kindness greeted her as of old. The daughter of Duncan Clavers became the idol of the community; the rich contents of her trunks afforded an endless subject of wonder and admiration to her companions—her inexhaustible fund of pocket-money often procured them more substantial pleasure—and her beauty was the envy and ornament of the school. Cross teachers were lenient toward her, mild ones more indulgent, and the motherless child was surrounded by an atmosphere of kindness.

It was her seventeenth birthday. The day before she had returned to her father. He received his child with

proud affection, and gazed admiringly on the beautiful face. Now and then, however, as some expression shot across it, he would almost see his wife again, before him ; and Minna often wondered at the strange coldness with which he then repulsed her. He was capricious in his kindness, but still she loved him ; her toilet-table had that day been covered with costly gifts of every description, and every wish was gratified.

No brilliant assembly had celebrated her birthday—he did not wish to present her yet to the world ; and the two now sat alone together in the lofty parlors. The mufflers which had concealed the splendid curtains since the wife's desertion were now removed—the covers had been taken off the furniture—and the rooms once more presented an appearance of being inhabited. He had never spoken to her about her mother ; those in the house had been forbidden to mention the subject, and Minna supposed that her mother had died in her infancy. But he felt that she must now hear the truth from his lips, before mingling with those who would poison her peace with their malicious inuendoes.

They had been silent for some time ; Minna sat in an attitude of thoughtful repose, and he had been considering how to introduce the odious subject.

"Minna," said he, at length, "do you ever think of your mother?"

"Sometimes," replied the daughter, sadly ; "I think how delightful it must be to have a mother. Oh, how I wish she had not died!"

"Would that she had died!" muttered Duncan Clavers, between his clinched teeth; but Minna did not hear this, and he added, quietly, "she is not dead—that is, not that I have heard of."

"*Not dead!*" she exclaimed, springing to his side, "oh, dear papa! tell me where she is, that I may go to her this instant!"

"Silly girl!" was his stern reply. "Which is the sadder, think you: to have the memory of a pure-hearted mother, who died in her youth and loveliness, or know that one lives, a violator of her marriage vows, a deserter of her helpless child, a disgrace even to herself? The very fact of her being alive, an alien from her husband and child, might have told you the sad truth."

Minna trembled; and covering her face with her small hands, she listened in breathless silence.

"You are now old enough," he continued, "to be made acquainted with the story which I have hitherto carefully kept from you. I would not have your childhood blighted by the knowledge of your mother's disgrace; but the time has now come, Minna, when others will whisper the tale in your ear, even should I conceal it. *Your mother!*" said he, bitterly; "Yes, you have need to be proud of her. She deceived me before marriage—she has deceived me since. Abusing my trusting kindness, she abandoned her home, and fled with some lover, probably across the sea; I have never seen nor heard from her since. To-night, Minna, is the anniversary of her elopement; it weighs heavily upon me, for it has been a slur upon my

honor—it will be visited upon her innocent child. May curses rest upon her and her worthless paramour!”

“Father, dearest father!” pleaded the daughter, while the large tears fell upon her cheek; “do not, do not speak so! I *know* that she is innocent! My own, my beautiful mother, whom I have thought of, and loved from childhood, as one too pure for earth. Perhaps she was carried off against her will—perhaps—”

“Silence!” interrupted her father, angrily; “have you no more sense, girl, than to invent these ridiculous fancies? You do not know her as I did. She left me, I say, of her own free will—made my name a by-word with the crowd!”

Minna dared not utter another word in her mother’s defense; his angry vehemence frightened her, and she could only sit and weep in sorrow for that mother’s disgrace.

“Was she not very beautiful?” she asked, at length.

“Beautiful! yes, it was her cursed beauty that has brought me to this! A valuable possession, truly! Do not look that way, Minna; you remind me of *her*, and then I hate you! Come into the library,” he continued, “and feast your eyes with her deceitful beauty.”

Minna followed with a faltering step; and Duncan Clavers, approaching the book-case, unlocked a small drawer, and took from thence a closed box. He had never opened it since that night, and now handed it to his daughter, saying:

“Look upon it, if you will—but do not show me her treacherous features!”

Minna's trembling hands could scarcely unfasten the case; but at length the beautiful face beamed upon her, and her eyes filled with tears as she gazed sadly upon it. Oh, it was very beautiful! It had been taken just after the birth of Minna; and the large dark eyes had a dreamy languor, as they looked lovingly upon the gazer—the complexion was like the lily, with a faint tinge of color in the delicate cheek, and the lips of a rose-bud hue. Minna stood and gazed upon it; and sweet, dreamy thoughts came gliding into her soul; she pressed her lips reverently upon the angel-face, and her father, taking the case from her hand, shut it quickly from her view.

They returned to the parlor, each occupied with different thoughts; his were bitter, while hers were only sad. That night the petted heiress retired to rest with her first sorrow upon her heart; knowledge is often bitter indeed, and she lay awake upon her sleepless couch, pondering over the probable fate of her beautiful mother. She could not believe her guilty—those pure eyes could express naught but what was lovely; and she fell asleep at length, as she murmured, "Mother! beautiful, unfortunate mother! Will you ever return to your child?"

The year again came round, and it was Minna Clavers' eighteenth birthday. That beautiful face was even more lovely, with its sweet, bewitching expression, and the figure was almost fairy-like in its proportions. Again, costly

gifts were scattered around her apartment, and sparkling gems were clasped upon neck and arms; but her mind was filled with the last birthday's disclosures. It had saddened her youthful spirits, and left a weight upon her heart; and listlessly she passed from one enjoyment to another.

The father proposed that they should pass the evening at the theater. Duncan Clavers had never once entered it since that autumn evening fourteen years before; they had then gone to witness the last representation of an English actress—they now went to welcome the appearance of one. The papers were filled with the praises of the beautiful Mrs. Walton; her talents, her loveliness, and interesting manner; and every one crowded to witness her first appearance. But Minna listlessly ran her eyes over these panegyrics; and yielding to, rather than seconding her father's proposal, the heiress stepped languidly into the softly cushioned carriage, without one expectation of pleasure or enjoyment. Duncan Clavers folded the cashmere shawl carefully about his daughter's shoulders, and seemed to be fearful lest a breath of air should blow too freely upon her.

The carriage soon drew up at the door of the theater; and as the light from the lamps fell upon the beautiful face and rich dress of Minna, many pressed forward to gaze upon her. But another carriage had drawn up at the same time; and as if recognizing something familiar, the solitary occupant bent eagerly forward, and scanned, with a rapid, examining gaze, the faces of Duncan Clavers and

his daughter. As long as they remained in sight, these beautiful eyes were fixed mournfully upon them; then hastily drawing her cloak closer over her head and face, the actress passed on with a deep sigh to her dressing-room.

The scene appeared to him the same as when he reviewed it last; if some faces had disappeared, they were now succeeded by others, and he could see no difference. He was very silent and grave as he sat there in the curtained box where *she* had last sat; and the remembrances of that autumn night crowded thick and fast about him. People were surprised to see Duncan Clavers again occupying his old place; and the admiring glances which had before been bestowed on the beautiful wife, were now directed to the equally lovely daughter. He had almost forgotten the stage, and the representation he came to witness—so absorbed was he in his mournful retrospection; and he was now aroused from his reverie by the buzz of admiration around him.

He glanced toward the stage. The curtain had drawn up, and like some beautiful creature of light stood the actress—her eyes cast down beneath the reiterated plaudits of that astonished circle. Her beautiful head was drooped, her hands meekly folded on her bosom, and she stood thus, motionless and calm—though her heart was throbbing wildly at this enthusiastic reception. Beautiful she certainly was, but there was something peculiar in her beauty—it was not mere stage-effect; there was something distinguished in her whole appearance; something very

different from the actress-look which characterizes stage-performers.

Minna Clavers bent eagerly forward to gaze upon that speaking face. Her listlessness was now thrown aside, and she riveted her eyes upon the actress, unable to remove her gaze. Once Mrs. Walton glanced toward the box; she caught the full light of those beaming eyes, and her voice faltered as she proceeded with her part. By a curious coincidence, the play was "The Stranger;" and Minna sat trembling and sick at heart, while her father's face was expressive almost of agony. Now and then Duncan Clavers recognized an expression, a tone, that seemed familiar; and he gazed upon the actress in a state of breathless interest. They loaded her with flowers—they made the place resound with acclamations—and yet she stood calm, cold, and unmoved. She courtesied with graceful gratitude; but no flush of gratified vanity came into her cheek, no ambitious fire lit up her eye, and her apparent indifference rendered her still more an object of interest. Her voice had a touching pathos, a sweetness that went directly to the heart; and her soft, dark eyes roved listlessly about, as though seeking in vain for some resting-place.

The father and daughter rode home in silence. Minna was still dwelling on the lovely face that reminded her so strongly of her mother's picture; now and then, during the representation, when overwhelmed with sorrow, she almost fancied that it must be *her*—it looked as the picture looked, with its expression of gentle melancholy.

Duncan Clavers did not ask himself if love, love from which *gold* had kept aloof, was really springing up in his heart ; calculation, cautiousness, interest were forgotten ; and his mind still pictured the beautiful face on which he had dwelt with such strange fascination.

Time passed on ; the beautiful actress was overwhelmed with admiration, praises, flattery—even words of love were sounded in her ear from all directions ; but she was like a marble statue, beautiful to look upon, with eloquent expression in the chiseled features—but giving back no echo to their honied words. Her adorers could only look upon her on the stage—in private, a small, black silk mask shaded, though not entirely concealed her features ; and she refused all audiences without this covering.

Duncan Clavers had hung enraptured over her night after night ; and at length, he too spoke of love. He was almost surprised at himself when the confession came—there was something that repelled him at the time when he felt most attracted ; but he could no longer keep it back. He had spoken ; and now, in a state of strange agitation, awaited her answer.

He did not see the expression that passed over her face ; the light in those dark eyes, or the smile upon her lips—the black silk mask concealed it all. They were both silent, till he longed for some word or sound to break the solemn stillness. He knew that she was odd—he had seen it before in many things ; and yet her manner of receiving his declaration surprised and annoyed him. Those great dark, melancholy eyes were fixed upon him

with an earnest gaze—a half-doubting expression; and he remained spell-bound beneath their glance.

He was driving home, and she was at his side. She had accepted his invitation to supper, and now reclined back in a corner of the carriage; not even a fold of her garments coming in contact with him. He was satisfied to have her there—pleased that he had triumphed; and yet he felt no disposition to advance closer. He could not have summoned courage to touch her hand. They drove on in silence; and he sat in a state of bewilderment, wondering at his situation, and believing himself to be in a sort of dream. Once or twice he thought he heard a gasping sigh and a sob; but he did not speak, and the carriage stopped before long at his own door.

That silent drive had seemed an age of existence; and he gladly descended from the carriage, and offered his assistance to Mrs. Walton. She trembled with a strange emotion, and he lifted her out in his arms. He was elated with his triumph; it must be *love* that caused this agitation in the beautiful statue; and with the most lover-like gallantry he conducted her to the spacious drawing-room. She glanced bewildered around, and pressed her hand upon her forehead, as though striving to bring up some dim, half-forgotten resolution. The fugitive wife again stood within the walls of that home which she had abandoned fourteen years before; and she listened breathlessly, almost expecting to hear the tones of a childish voice, or the noise of infant merriment. But no such sounds greeted her ear. Then came a host of recollections filling up the

forgotten space, and with a sigh she placed her hand in his arm, and allowed him to conduct her to a seat.

“Why that sigh, sweet one?” he whispered.

“We often sigh in the midst of happiness,” she replied, turning those beaming eyes full upon him. “Does not a foreboding for the future, or perchance a recollection of the past, often come over you when you would commune with other thoughts, and bring a sadness in the midst of pleasure?”

These deep tones fell upon his ear with thrilling earnestness; he started suddenly, and stood gazing upon her with a fierce, suspicious glance.

But the eyes had drooped again beneath their long dark lashes, and his momentary anger passed quickly away. She exerted herself to amuse him, and her conversation became brilliant and fascinating. Duncan Clavers sat entranced; the marble statue had melted before his love—had shown itself in a new character for him, and him alone—and his face was flushed with triumph. She could have led him then submissive in her chains; and a feeling of gratified revenge arose in her heart. Now she felt was her time; and cautiously introducing the subject, she said, while her musical voice slightly faltered—

“You were speaking of your daughter just now—do you know that I have often gazed upon her features with a feeling of deep yearning, while something seemed to remind me of other days? She is surpassingly beautiful, and her face brings up the memory of one I lost. Would that I could see her now! But, perchance, she cares not

to regard *the actress* as other than a source of amusement."

Duncan Clavers was not a little surprised at her wish, but it was sufficient for him that she had expressed it; telling her that she should soon be gratified, he left the room, and went to his daughter's apartment.

Minna was still up and reading when her father entered; his curious message filled her with a strange emotion, a vague, undefined feeling; and trembling violently, she accompanied him to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Clavers had risen when she found herself alone, and approached a picture that stood opposite the mantel. It was that of a little girl in a baby-frock, with waving, gold-colored hair, and a sweet, arch smile upon the red lips. The mother's heart throbbed with old remembrances as she saw her child just as she had pictured her; and then she glanced with a sigh at another portrait, which represented her as she had appeared that first night at the theater; the same small, exquisitely shaped head, large, dreamy eyes, and pearly complexion; but she soon turned from that to the other picture—she loved best to remember her child.

The door opened, and Minna, pale as a marble statue, stood within it. She trembled in every limb, and felt almost afraid to enter. Duncan Clavers had retired to the library, leaving the two to their mysterious interview; and the young girl almost wished for his support. The actress had sunk back upon a couch, and Minna heard a succession of gasping sobs.

"Who—what are you?" she exclaimed; "you look so like—and yet you can not be!"

Her only reply was a withdrawal of the mask; disclosing features deadly pale, but marvelously like the portrait.

"You are—you must be my mother!" cried Minna. "Oh, tell me that I am not deceived!"

"Minna!—*my child!*" she murmured.

The young girl sprang impulsively toward her, and the two were locked in a close embrace.

"But why do I see you thus, dear mother?" asked the daughter, at length. "Why are you not in your own home, where we all love you so much? Oh, now I remember," she added, in confusion, "he told me that—"

"What did he tell you, Minna?" asked her mother, in a tone of command; "I would know if he has attempted to lower me in the estimation of my child!"

She hesitated, but Mrs. Clavers was firm; and at length, with tears, Minna revealed the disclosures made by her father on that birthday night.

"Answer me one question truly," said her mother, when she had concluded, "did you believe him?"

Minna gazed for a moment on the pale, calm face; then throwing herself into her mother's arms, she exclaimed—

"No, mother! I did not!—I *do* not!"

"Thank Heaven!" murmured Mrs. Clavers, as she folded her daughter in her arms, "that my child, at least, will do me justice! No!" she continued, vehemently, "believe it not! The whole is a vile, despicable falsehood,

worthy of him who invented it! I will tell you my sad story, Minna, and you shall judge between us two."

Her daughter listened attentively to the narrative of her bright and happy girlhood—her first, absorbing love and its mercenary return—and her idolizing affection for her beautiful child. Mrs Clavers spared not the circumstance of her flight, but she told of her misery at parting from her child; and Minna wept, as she wished that she had never been separated from her loved and beautiful mother.

"We arrived in England," she continued, "and I accompanied Mrs. — to her own home. She has proved a kind and disinterested friend to me, and under her tuition I became acquainted with the rules of my art. I met with encouragement, praise, admiration; the excitement, at length, became necessary to me, and with pleasure I anticipated the nightly display. Gold, too, flowed into my hands, but still my mind was absorbed with the one overwhelming thought; in the soft, twilight hour, Minna, the figure of my child often rose up before me—and hers was the last name that trembled on my lips at night. Do you, too, view your mother as an outcast? A guilty wretch, who is a dishonor to all connected with her?"

The young girl slid down upon her knees, and taking one of those fair, slender hands in hers, pressed it reverentially to her lips.

"Bless you! my own, my loved one!" murmured her mother, "could you but know how I have looked forward to this meeting!—how it has cheered me in my dark and lonely hours, and made bright ones seem yet brighter."

Minna moved not from her mother's side; she could not bear to leave her, now that the beautiful original of the cherished picture spoke words of love and tenderness. But sorrow had come mingled with her happiness; her father she could no longer regard with love and reverence—he appeared to her as the persecutor of her mother, and she almost dreaded to meet him again, lest her feelings should betray themselves.

“Minna,” said her mother, “we must part soon—I can never return to my home.”

“Oh! I can not, can not part with you!” exclaimed Minna, as she twined her arms about her, “what shall I do?”

“Would you go with me, Minna?” she asked, in a voice scarcely audible.

One moment's hesitation, as home and all its joys rose up before her; and then the daughter murmured: “Whither thou goest I will go!”

She had triumphed! Through time, distance, all, she was still beloved; and the pale cheeks were tinged with the bright flush of joy. One hurried embrace, a few whispered words, and Minna retreated to her apartment, while Duncan Clavers returned from his solitary sojourn in the library, not in the best of humors. He thought the interview unreasonably long—she must prefer his daughter to himself; but his transitory anger was soon dissipated by the lively sallies of his brilliant companion.

“Oh, cast that shadow from thy brow,
My dark-eyed love, be glad again!”

Warbled the actress in a voice of touching melody ; and he was again her humble slave.

A few more weeks passed, and the daughter of Duncan Clavers disappeared as his wife had done, leaving him entirely desolate. A note was placed in his hands ; and with galled and tortured feelings, he read as follows :

“ Revenge, thou art indeed sweet ! My trampled love, my trusting confidence, my outraged dignity, all are now requited ! I once more fold my child to my bosom, and tell thee, Duncan Clavers, that it is the slighted wife who has lured the daughter from her home—torn her from an unworthy father, to rest once more near her mother’s heart.

“ And I won love, too, disinterested love, from *you* ! Oh, it almost makes me laugh to think of it ! And you little knew, poor fool ! that the brilliant actress was but the runaway wife, exercising her wiles upon you but to make you still more desolate ! I would have taken her with me that night, but you prevented me, and now the blow strikes still deeper. Adieu ! I hasten to *my child* !”



MINNA CLAVERS.

A SEQUEL TO THE WIFE'S REVENGE.

IT was with wildly throbbing hearts that the two fair fugitives found themselves journeying from the city which had been productive of so much sorrow to both. Minna thought not of the future; it was shrouded in a thick veil of mystery, which it seemed impossible to penetrate; and casting aside all other considerations, she turned with a new, delightful feeling to the mother, whose image had so often mingled in her childish dreams.

But Mrs. Clavers, even while she folded her daughter to her bosom, felt agitated with conflicting thoughts. She had obtained her child, the thought of which often came encouragingly upon her when overwhelmed with doubts and difficulties—she had accomplished the revenge for which she steadfastly toiled—the proud man was humbled—brought to her very feet, and his jewel wrested from him—and yet she pondered and hesitated. What course should she pursue? Should she seclude her daughter from all contamination with her own course of life—carefully guard her from all association with the world,

her world, and thus insensibly teach her to look upon her mother with distrust—to draw a line between their respective pursuits, and have no sympathies, nothing in common? She could not do this; she could not bring her child from her early home—cut off all former associations, with nothing to supply the void thus created. And yet, could she expose that daughter in all her purity and innocence to the contaminations of the play-house? Should she mark out for her her own course of life—doom her to become the slave of the public? How would that proud head bear to bow in humble acknowledgment to galling patronage? How could she, with her timid, retiring manners, gain sufficient courage to arrest the attention of an audience? And yet, on the other hand, as she gazed on Minna's lovely face, her kindling features, with their ever-varying expression, and observed the grace and elegance of every movement, an emotion of fond pride came over her, and she would picture her daughter attracting the eyes and admiration of all—now wrought up to enthusiasm with the wildness of passion; and again subduing with the melancholy of despair. In what had *she* suffered during her career? What had *she* lost in flying from the man she hated, and entering upon the brilliant course which she had made peculiarly her own? Was not her fame untarnished even in the eyes of the censorious world—was her name ever associated with those of her profession who were a disgrace alike to themselves and others? They had no relatives, no friends but those she had made—they had severed all ties save the one that bound them

together, and what should they care for the opinion of others? The beautiful young actress might yet wear a coronet—such things had happened before—and they could then look down upon those who had hitherto despised them. Ah! Minna Clavers, beautiful and unsuspecting one! a tempest is gathering about you.

Often, in the still watches of the night, when Minna slept serenely, a mother's form bent over her couch, and she would come to gaze upon her treasure, and assure herself that it was safe. Warm kisses were pressed on the unconscious brow, and often a tear-drop fell unheeded on the sleeping face. She could not come to a conclusion; she would dwell almost bewildered upon the bright prospect, where stood Minna, the queen of light and beauty—but then, as she gazed upon the sleeping figure of her child, who had left all for *her*, a remembrance of that autumn night at the theater came across her mind, and she could almost hear the whisper, "*Mother, is this heaven?*"

They arrived in London; and Minna, who had often dwelt in fancy upon a voyage to the scene of all that *was* renowned in history or tradition—where riot, bloodshed, and pestilence have exercised their sway—where royal heads have bowed to the block, and noble hearts have suffered martyrdom—whose very walls whisper tales of crime and mystery, and horror, now felt almost bewildered as she stepped, for the first time, upon a strange land and a strange scene. The home of the actress was in one of the most retired and aristocratic streets; and Minna experienced an undefinable sensation of gloom as she entered

its quiet precincts, and contrasted its appearance with the glare of the city she had left. The solemn-looking houses towered up before her in dark masses, and seemed frowning at her for the step she had taken—scarcely a ray of sunlight rested upon the gloomy stone—the atmosphere was foggy, and the sky of a lead-colored hue. No wonder that on that first night of her arrival she felt cut off from all; every face looked cold and unpromising, and throwing herself into her mother's arms she wept bitterly. Mrs. Clavers, too, felt a strange chill on returning to the land of her adoption; but concealing her own feelings, she endeavored to soothe the agitated Minna. She took her around the spacious house, and opening one splendidly furnished room after another, succeeded in interesting her attention. At an early hour the two retired to rest; they could not bear to be separated in that great, lonely house, and mother and daughter shared the same couch.

The door of the beautiful actress was soon besieged with visitors and friends, who joyfully welcomed her back. The star had returned to its orbit, and people again crowded to hear, admire, and wonder. To fuller audiences than ever were the scenes rehearsed which never failed to win applause; and completely carried away by the glare and excitement, Mrs. Clavers lived but on the smiles of the public; praise, flattery, admiration, had become necessary to her, and she drew long draughts of the exhilarating nectar. Minna, in the mean time, had been carefully secluded; few knew even of the daughter's existence, and still fewer had seen her; but those who had were loud in

praises of her beauty, and strange reports circulated around, until the actress' house was enveloped in a cloud of mystery.

The first effect of this new page in her life, and the excitement of being restored to a long-lost mother had now almost worn away, and Minna began to see things with the reality of truth. She felt anxious about her mother, whose spirits were sometimes depressed almost to melancholy, and then, excited by the glitter of the evening, she became wild, brilliant, and reckless in her gayety. Excitement was doing its work upon her; and Minna often beheld, with alarm, the languid pallor of her countenance at the breakfast-table, while her hand shook nervously as she lifted her cup, and scarcely a mouthful of food passed her lips in the morning. She blushed deeply, when one evening while watching the progress of her mother's toilet, she saw the color which had faded from her pale cheeks supplied by artificial means. Mrs. Clavers saw the blush which rose on her cheek, while the eyes drooped timidly, beneath their long lashes; but the practice had now become so habitual that she quite forgot her daughter's presence. A feeling of degradation came over her, and she almost shrank from Minna's glance; but, recovering herself quickly, she said, with a smile:

"Deceit, Minna, is the world's atmosphere; I could not appear before my admirers with these pale cheeks—instead of feeling grateful for this proof of my assiduous efforts to please them, they would transfer to some rival the praise which now constitutes my daily food."

Minna made no reply, but watched her mother with a painful interest as she proceeded to attire herself in her dress for the evening. She appeared that night in the character of "Media," and the heavy velvet robe, the flashing jewels, and radiant appearance, struck the daughter with a feeling of sadness, as she mentally contrasted them with the morning's habiliments. Mrs. Clavers took Minna to the theater with her, and left her in the drawing-room. The young girl experienced a sense of humiliation as she beheld her mother tricked out in the robes of the tragedy queen, and following the beck of others. Even the thunders of applause that shook the very house, grated painfully on her ear; and, covering her burning face with her hands, she wept silently. No one heeded her, and she had forgotten time and place; but suddenly a footstep sounded near, and her mother stood before her.

"What, *tears*, Minna!" exclaimed Mrs. Clavers, "what is the meaning of this? Has any one offended you, child?"

She looked up, and her eyes were almost dazzled by the brilliant figure before her. The face was triumphantly beautiful; the applause which resounded on all sides had lighted up her eyes with a radiant glow—excitement had tinged her cheeks and lips with a deeper hue—and the splendid robes and triumphant air invested the whole figure with a regal power. But although splendid, it was a painful sight for the daughter; and, falling at her feet, she exclaimed:

"Mother! dear, *dear* mother! Do lay aside these

hateful robes, and be yourself again—I hardly know you, thus! Give up this horrid life, which is killing you by degrees, and let us seek some retirement—any where from this glare and bustle!”

A sudden pallor overspread the countenance of the successful actress at her daughter's passionate entreaty; but turning from those pleading eyes, she murmured: “I could not give up this exciting life, and live in retirement—do not ask me, Minna. Besides,” she added, in a low voice, “what would support me without it?”

“Do not speak of that, dear mother,” said the daughter, sadly; “I would do any thing—every thing! I will work—go out by the day even, and you shall stay at home and be waited upon.”

“These hands, Minna, do not look much like work,” replied her mother, as she took one of the soft palms in hers. “And you little know, poor child! of what you speak. To those brought up in luxury poverty appears as a sort of romance, if to be endured for those they love, but how different this is from the reality! No, no, Minna—I have seen more of the world than you have, and poverty appears to me with a sufficiently ferocious aspect. Come, child, the carriage waits; go to sleep, and forget all this romantic nonsense.”

Mrs. Clavers was in one of her bright, sparkling moods that night, and stepped gayly into the carriage; but Minna followed with a heavy heart, unable to suppress a sigh as she thought of the future. Happy are those who do not see behind the scenes!

The winter had passed lingeringly away, and sweet spring hovered about the dim old city. To the petted heiress, who had just entered upon a round of gayety before leaving home, it had been a season of uneventful seclusion. She read in the papers accounts of balls, routs, and parties; but the gloomy streets resounded not with the voices of their merriment—the thick walls gave back no echo of music's strains—all seemed shrouded in mist and silence. The carriage of the actress was sometimes seen in Hyde Park, and then noble heads were bowed in salutation, and lofty plumes waved condescendingly, but they were not for *her*—not a face or feature awakened memories of the past or loved associations—and Minna leaned sadly back in her silent corner, unknown, unnoticed, uncared-for. She saw the turf green in the porch, the light, gossamer foliage drooping in sprays from the waked-up trees, heard the caroling of birds from their gilded prison-houses, and knew that it was spring; but a cloud hung ever over the gloomy city—a cloud rested heavily on her heart. She turned from the blank around her, and sought refuge in books. The library was well-stocked with plays, romances, and the works of the quaint old English writers; but of books, the good had ceased to interest, the instructive to please—and day after day sat Minna Clavers absorbed in the pages of fiction, roaming at large in an ideal world of her own.

One bright morning Mrs. Clavers stood by the open sash, while the sweet breath of spring fanned her pallid cheek, and played with the rich masses of dark hair that were straying from beneath her cap. She was thinking

how very beautiful is earth; but sometimes when the sunshine rests brightly on all around, and sweet sounds and bright faces are heralding in the season of joy and gladness, visions of a dark, narrow resting-place will rise up and fill the soul with sadness, for it is hardest to die when all looks beautiful around—when every feeling clings still more fondly to earth. As if in accordance with her thoughts, a sweet strain rose tremblingly upon the air—a low voice of thrilling softness chaunted the “Lament of the Irish Emigrant.” Oh, there is nothing like a sweet voice! It wraps the very soul in a state of bewildering pleasure—it softens the harsh, and melts the gentle heart. Tears, *real* tears dimmed the eyes of the actress, memory carried her back to the days of childhood and innocence—days when she would have indignantly spurned the idea of becoming what she was. Often had she warbled that very song for her kind, loving father; could the shade of Justus Clarke now behold his daughter, what would be his feelings? Or at evening, could he recognize in the tricked-up actress, whose province it was to deceive, the little, innocent Minna—the light and sunshine of his home? Blessed are the dead who sleep, and have no knowledge of what passes around them!—they rest in blissful unconsciousness.

Mrs. Clavers stood listening to the strain which the birds seemed to take up and echo, and then another melancholy lay, and yet another rose upon her ear. The songs were all sad—not one merry note broke the sorrowful harmony; and soon the slight figure of Minna passed be-

neath the window. As the bright sunshine rested on those flowing tresses, and lit up the youthful face into a glow of dazzling beauty, while the sweet notes still rose and fell upon the air, a new thought came into the mind of the actress; and she stood and pondered, while watching the retreating figure.

"Minna," said her mother, that evening, before dressing for the theater, "do you sing? I have heard no music except *paid* music, for a long time."

"Yes," replied the daughter; "I sang when at home, for my—" *father*, she would have said, but recollecting herself, she left the sentence unfinished, and burying her head in her mother's lap, sobbed convulsively.

"She wants excitement," thought Mrs. Clavers, "to make her forget this haunting past, and she must have it." "But will you not sing for me, Minna?" continued her mother. "I love to hear low music at twilight—so dry these tears, child, and sing to me some sweet, wild strain."

Minna smiled sadly, and with a steady effort succeeded in banishing all traces of sorrow. But old remembrances almost overspread her as she proceeded, and the suppressed emotion lent a tremulous sweetness to her tones that rendered them still more thrilling. The actress became lost in a pleasant dream. It seemed as though she had roamed to some wildly beautiful spot, and seated in a sunny glade by some rushing waterfall, a spirit-bird whispering sweet songs in her ear, had lulled her to sleep with snatches of wild and beautiful melody. The twi-

light deepened around, and still Mrs. Clavers sat rapt, fascinated by her daughter's wondrous powers. Minna's voice had been the pride of the school, and a source of never-ending pleasure to her father, who almost lost his spirit of calculation while under the influence of those thrilling tones. It was indeed marvelous in its sweetness and compass; it was one of those voices that entrance the hearer at once, and make him fear lest it should cease.

After "Auld Robin Gray," "The Old Arm-Chair," and "Highland Mary," the mind turns to earth and commonplace almost with disgust; and Mrs. Clavers sighed deeply as she laid out the evening's habiliments, while the bright glare of candles put to flight the soft, subdued tints of twilight.

"But, Minna," said she, "what a very melancholy taste you display, child. Have you nothing brighter, more lively to entertain me with? These sentimental, pining words, have almost given me the horrors. Come," continued her mother, as she glanced at the French clock on the mantel-piece, "I have still half an hour to waste in listening to sweet sounds, before I am doomed to hear the scraping of the orchestra, so take your seat at the piano, child, and let us hear what you can produce."

Minna did as she was directed, and at first her hands glided listlessly over the keys; but the familiar sounds soon roused her from her apathy, and the bright flush came into her cheek, and the sparkle to her eye as of old. Her whole soul was in the performance, and Mrs. Clavers listened in perfect astonishment. She had heard the in-

strument touched before by those who were considered masters of the art, but never with the skill and execution displayed by this young girl.

"Minna," exclaimed her mother, in enthusiasm, "you are a prodigy! a fortune! Display these talents to the public—do not suffer them to lie unnoticed and unknown, and the fame of the youthful cantatrice will spread itself over Europe. Think of the prospect that awaits you!"

Minna turned very pale, and leaned heavily against the instrument. She had not been prepared for this new trial—she had not even dreamed of such a possibility, and now it had come suddenly upon her. Her eyes were fixed upon her mother with a pleading, half-reproachful gaze, and Mrs. Clavers well understood their mute language. She sighed as she proceeded to dress herself, and this sound of quiet grief almost made Minna waver. She glanced at her mother, and asked herself what right had she to refuse to exercise her talents when that mother toiled night after night uncomplainingly? But then the stage rose up before her, surrounded by a horrid sea of faces; she fancied herself failing, hissed at, insulted; and almost in turn she exclaimed:

"Oh, mother! do not ask me *that!* any thing but that! I should only disgrace you."

"I do not fear *that*, Minna," replied her mother, with a smile, "that threat has not the least terror for me. But make yourself easy, dear child," she added, in a tone of tenderness that went to Minna's heart, "you shall do nothing against your own will and choice. I did not

dwell for years upon the thought of having my child with me, to make her life wretched to her."

The carriage was at the door; the noise of wheels died away in the distance, and Minna sat bending over the music. It all looked hateful to her, the notes seemed staring at her forebodingly, the piano assumed a threatening appearance, and she almost regretted that she had ever learned to distinguish one tune from another. But then the tone of her mother's gentle "bless you, Minna!" came over her almost reproachfully; she thought of that mother's fading appearance, and a hollow cough which had now and then fallen upon her ear sounded like a knell. What if the fate of the desolate should be hers? A stranger in a strange land, what would become of her?

Mrs. Clavers beheld her laurels fading. A rival had divided the honors with her; and who, in addition to talent, possessed the charm of freshness and novelty. Hers was a totally different style, and the public seemed almost to forget their old favorite in their homage to the new. It was hard to take from her the very breath of life, for so had admiration now become, and she felt it most acutely. She kept her troubles to her own bosom, but Minna saw that something weighed heavily upon her mother's spirits, and the petted child of wealth and luxury now passed many sleepless nights.

Mrs. —, the actress, who had been the early friend of Mrs. Clavers, and the companion of her flight, now returned from a long and successful professional tour; and came one evening, soon after her arrival, to the house of

Mrs. Clavers. Minna was seldom visible to her mother's visitors, and now remained in her own apartment; while the two sat talking over old times and present prospects. Mrs. ——— seemed nearer to her than any one else she knew, and to her Mrs. Clavers freely unburdened her mind.

"This acting is wearing, toilsome, ungrateful business," she sighed. "Little do those who are so fickle in their applause deem of the aching hearts, the midnight hours, and the harrowing cares of those who win it! And then, after years of toil and trouble, to behold the admiration which becomes necessary, as it were, to one's very existence, bestowed on another! Oh, I know not what to do! Sometimes it seems to me as though I should almost lose my reason."

"Do not speak so," said her companion, kindly, "for losing your reason, *chere amie*, would be a great injury to yourself, and of no sort of benefit to any one; the best course to pursue would be to bring forward something new in opposition to the attractions of this rival. The life of an actress is, as you say, a toiling one; it is not sufficient that she has acquired a high reputation in any particular branch—she must be continually on the strain to take advantage of every change of opinion, and put down all competition."

"Alas!" murmured Mrs. Clavers, "I have nothing new to offer. I have tried my utmost, and now feel almost discouraged."

"Where is your daughter?" asked the actress; "did

you not bring her with you? If beautiful and talented," she continued, "why not introduce her to the public, and teach her to supply your place? A new face and a young one would be a feather in your cap. Miss —— would then be obliged to look to her own laurels, instead of robbing you of yours."

Mrs. Clavers now spoke of Minna without reserve. She told the actress of her marvelous beauty, her wondrous powers, and her horror and repugnance toward the course of life proposed to her. Mrs. —— could not understand these scruples; she could not imagine that a young, obscure girl, with every advantage for the stage, instead of courting notoriety and fame, should actually *refuse* it! It was a mystery—a wonder; and, as much out of curiosity to behold such a person as to hear her vocal powers, she asked Mrs. Clavers to bring her down.

Poor Minna! she almost felt as though her fate were sealed, when her mother entered her apartment, and delivered the request; but in submissive obedience, she proceeded to the drawing-room. Mrs. —— was charmed, enraptured, astonished; every style was executed with truth and simplicity, and yet with a beauty of expression seldom equaled. They sat there till a late hour, listening to the bird-like strains; and on parting for the night, the great actress observed, in an expressive whisper to the anxious mother:

"Bring her out, and your fortune is made!"

That whisper sealed the doom of Minna Clavers.

The two were alone in Mrs. Clavers' dressing-room. The mother sat absorbed in a silent reverie, with her eyes fixed sadly upon her daughter, while Minna remained pale and silent. Each wished to break the silence, and yet each lacked courage to make the attempt.

Mrs. Clavers felt at length that she *must* speak; and in a voice of touching melancholy she said: "Do you know, Minna, that for some time past I have been troubled by the thought, that were I to be taken from you, you would be thrown helpless upon the world? Upon the world of *strangers*, Minna, and that is a hard and an un pitying one. An angry father would not receive you: cold faces would greet you on every side, and I blame myself for taking you from your luxurious home. It was wicked—it was selfish in me. But do not turn so pale, Minna—I did not speak of leaving you yet—it may be many, many years—I only spoke of what *might* happen."

The full lip quivered, a paroxysm of agony contracted the fair young face, and Minna wept in loud and uncontrollable grief.

Mrs. Clavers was almost frightened at the depth of the feelings she had awakened, and tried unsuccessfully to soothe the agitated girl.

"Minna," said her mother, at length, "these fine, sensitive feelings which the least inadvertent jar disturbs, will, if not restrained, cause you many moments of suffering, my poor child. They will find no echo in another's heart—the world can not understand them, it will trample on and wound them, as rough footsteps crush the timid flow-

ers—they prevent enjoyment of the present and heap up misery for the future. Whatever you do, do not give way to them—you had better be a block, a stone, than a person of sensitive feelings. They are brought more into play by solitude and an inexperience of the world ; a life of excitement is better for you in every way, Minna.”

Poor Minna ! she had become trembling and nervous ; a period of constant anxiety and trouble had weakened her spirits and energy ; and throwing herself at her mother’s feet, she exclaimed : “ Do with me as you please ! ”

“ My own one ! ” murmured Mrs. Clavers, with a burst of feeling ; “ my bright and beauteous one ! The neglect shown to the mother will now be amply repaid by the admiration bestowed on her child.”

Yes, it was summer. The foliage on the trees had deepened and thickened—the turf was of a darker hue—and the creeping ivy at the back of the house almost concealed the dark-hued stone. There was music, too, in the lonely house ; notes, now high and playful, now low and sad, melted upon the air, and filled the atmosphere around with an incense of melody ; and a fair young figure flitted to and fro, and gleamed in its white dress amid rolls of music and heavy instruments. It was Minna, but the face was pale, and the soft braids of hair assumed a darker hue from contrast with the marble brow. But she toiled on and uttered no word of complaint ; she passively went through heavy lessons from dull professors, obeyed the orders of those who came to weigh her talent in the balance with gold, and endured their comments with statue-like

apathy. She trembled though as she looked forward ; her mother's spirit had become fairly radiant with excitement—she listened to these beautiful tones, heard the approval, the admiration of critics, and grew almost dizzy with anticipation of the fame and glory that spread away in the distance.

But Minna had many misgivings ; the evening that approached with rapid strides was to her a fearful ordeal ; she feared that her mother had overrated her powers—she feared failure, disgrace, and trembled to think of its effect upon her who seemed to regard it as the gate through which they would pass into a new and beautiful existence. And she leaned her head on the slight hands and thought until her reason was almost bewildered ; she could scarcely realize it that she, Minna Clavers, the heiress, should in one short period be torn from a home where all had been *her* slaves, to become the slave of others. It must be a dream—a wild delusion of the senses ; but as she glanced tremblingly around, the rolls of music and all the hateful *et ceteras* of her profession mournfully assured her that it was indeed reality.

The evening came at last ; and the youthful cantatrice was almost wild with fear and excitement. Mrs. Clavers could hardly contain herself ; her brilliant anticipations were now about to be realized, and she hovered about from one thing to another in a tumult of delightful confusion. Mrs. —, the actress, had come to encourage the young *débutante* for her first appearance—lights blazed in every apartment—servants were hurrying to and fro—and all

was bustle and confusion. A new opera had been written for the night; managers doubted not the effect of the youthful songstress—the beautiful daughter of the equally beautiful “Mrs. Walton”—and Minna, at the commencement of the piece, was to make her appearance in the character of an ocean nymph, emerging from a large cave, and astonish the audience with a burst of melody. Excitement was at its height; flattering rumors of the young cantatrice had floated about, and a brilliant crowd impatiently awaited the moment of her *debut*.

Minna stood tremblingly before the mirror arrayed in the airy habiliments of her character; clouds of white, of the most fairy texture, floated about her graceful figure, and she reminded the gazer of some faint star, or a sweet glimpse of moonlight. But the youthful heart was throbbing wildly; all looked dark before her, and it seemed impossible to endure the stares and comments of a whole assembly.

“Now, Minna,” whispered her mother, as she kissed the pale cheek, “let us again hear the opening song before you go.”

A burst of melody filled the room; the notes seemed even sweeter, more thrilling than they had been before; and the actress glanced at the proud mother with a look that spoke volumes. The arrangements were all completed, the hour had come, and Mrs. Clavers stepped into the carriage, the happiest of human beings.

The house was completely filled; every corner seemed taken up, and people spoke of nothing—thought of nothing

but the young *debutante*. She was represented as more beautiful than the evening star, with the voice of a siren, and the face of an angel; and hundreds of eyes were fixed on the provoking curtain that concealed all from their sight. What a brilliant assemblage it was! Plumes waved, and jewels flashed, and beautiful faces gleamed out from the crowd in restless impatience.

The curtain was drawn up; an ocean scene appeared in sight, and from the cave emerged the heroine of the night. A slight, girlish form, that seemed almost lost amid the space—a face of dazzling loveliness—and a pair of dark, brilliant eyes, that now wore the expression of the startled fawn, gleamed upon the audience. Never had so lovely a cantatrice appeared upon the stage; never had beauty of so high an order gleamed out from the habiliments of the actress; and Minna was almost deafened by the applause that greeted her appearance. It would slacken for a moment, and then be resumed with increased force; peal after peal reverberated through the house—jeweled hands flung bouquets upon the stage—and even the cane of royalty mingled in the noise. They seemed to forget that they had come to *hear*—a sight of the songstress roused the wildest bursts of enthusiasm. Mrs. Clavers remained behind the scenes, and the sweetest music never fell half so melodiously upon her ears as all this din and racket.

At length it died away for the songstress to commence, but Minna moved not—uttered not a note. The orchestra repeated the part, but still she remained silent. The audience, pitying her youth and confusion, encouraged her with

another round of applause; a low voice whispered, "*Minna!*" and roused by the sound, she opened her rigid lips, and endeavored to proceed with her part. But no sound came forth; she tried again, and the dreadful truth fell darkly upon her—*she had lost her voice!* One wild, despairing look to the audience—a scarcely-breathed murmur of "mother!" and the young *debutante* sank back in the arms of the manager. A wild shriek rose upon the air, but it came not from Minna—she had lost all knowledge of the present in blissful unconsciousness. The audience were disappointed, but pity predominated over anger—the rumor soon reached them that terror had destroyed the voice that was to have fascinated them as with a spell, and they returned home—still haunted with the remembrance of that beautiful face.

How many, many different scenes are crowded together within the precincts of a large city. Suffering makes us selfish, and those who have beheld the stars of their hope descend below the horizon, do not consider that the sun sets as darkly upon them—that the shadows and the clouds rest upon other hearts. There is a small room—an artist's studio—in an unfrequented part of the city, where we will now alight, and read the dark pages in the history of him who sits absorbed in tracing the tints upon his canvas.

Walter Lynde had been from childhood the sport of fortune. Winds that brought joy and gladness to others

scattered aside his slightly-built castles ; hope rose upon him in tints of gold and crimson, and faded amid the thunders and tempest ; loving faces passed away from earth, and long-trying friends grew cold. He was a child of genius, rocked in the cradle of poverty, and fanned by the breath of misfortune. Sometimes the clouds cleared up from his sky, and displayed the gold and azure beneath ; but this soon faded into greater darkness than before. He had been a lonely wanderer, without father or mother, sister or brother, upon the face of the earth ; dragging out a weary existence amid the unvarying routine of a country school, where he was half teacher and half scholar, until at length an unknown uncle came from the East Indies—a mother's brother, supposed long since to be dead, but now in possession of an inexhaustible fortune—home-sick, eccentric, and high-tempered. He found out his sister's child—took him from his drudging employment—and introduced him to the luxuries and elegancies of life. These were halcyon days for Walter ; he was no longer an outcast in the world ; he had found some one who loved him, and devotedly did he love his uncle in return. He loved him, not for his wealth—he never even thought of that—but for his kindness, his indulgence, and consideration for the lonely orphan. He appeared to him in the light of a good and powerful spirit, who had changed his gloomy life to a sphere of existence, beautiful as it was unexpected. His refined tastes were now cultivated, his talents brought to light, and his wishes indulged.

He was sculptor, painter, and poet. Often at his dingy

desk in the lonely school-room, after his troublesome charges had retired, did he sit for hours, and while away his cares by writing verses which breathed of genius and poetry, with nothing to rouse inspiration save the bare rafters overhead, and the rough desks and benches that surrounded him; but now a softly carpeted room, where the light came mellowed and subdued, luxurious chairs and couches, and a complete writing-table of beautiful workmanship, materially assisted his flights of genius. His uncle, to be sure, was not very deeply imbued with the spirit of poetry, and was apt to be rather dull in comprehending the sentiments thus breathed forth in verse; but if not intellectual, he was kind, and "as long as it amuses the boy," thought he, "why, let him scribble on." It was during this period that Walter began to appreciate the works of Canova, Raphael, Michael Angelo, and the hosts of sculptors and painters who have given immortality to former ages; his uncle could scarcely distinguish one piece of art from another, but he had come home determined to spend his money like a prince, and the first step toward this was to procure a handsome house, and fill it with fine furniture, statuary, and paintings.

In this congenial atmosphere the germ was developed, and Walter came forth a regular genius. All he said, did, or wrote, was very much admired; he had as yet requested nothing else for his efforts, and people were not disposed to refuse praise to the heir of the wealthy East Indian. He was fêted, courted, and caressed; his days glided on in beautiful harmony; every one seemed kind

and affectionate, and he began to be ashamed for having abused the world, even to himself.

But his tide of prosperity was not of long continuance. A few thoughtless words, incautiously dropped in a moment of excitement, were repeated, with various additions, to his uncle, by some kindly-disposed friend, and so twisted and distorted as to present a very different meaning from their original one; a coldness ensued, of which Walter tried in vain to discover the cause, and then his uncle began to assume toward him a petty tyranny, a contemptuous sort of patronage, which galled his proud mind and sensitive feelings. As long as favors were bestowed from affection, he felt no scruple in receiving them; but when he was made to feel his dependence, his spirit revolted at the idea. Several hints and angry speeches at length opened his eyes to the fact that his uncle suspected him of looking forward with pleasure to the time when he should enjoy unrestrainedly the whole of his hard-earned wealth. The indignant hue crimsoned his very brow as this mortifying idea for the first time rushed upon him, and he immediately sought an explanation with his uncle; but the old man had been influenced by false friends and advisers, and regarded his nephew's frankness upon the subject as another proof of his worthlessness.

The fatal words he could not deny; a high spirit on one side, and a hasty temper on the other, are not the best requisites for healing a difficulty—and the uncle and nephew parted. Poor Walter! he had imbibed a taste for luxury and expense, and now found himself again

thrown upon the world, with his condition even worse than it was before. Then he had known only hardships—now he had experienced a different life, a brighter side of the picture. He went, however, with confidence in himself he felt deeply grateful for his uncle's kindness, but all explanations that he could now offer would be accredited to mercenary influences—he resolved, therefore, to toil quietly on until he had reached the bright eminence of wealth and fame which his summer friends had always held up as the reward easily attainable to talents such as his, and then go to his uncle and be forgiven. He could not refuse him then—he could not *then* suspect him of interested motives—and this prospect it was which inspired him with energy in his new misfortune.

But he, like many others, soon found that talents which had been admired in a gold setting, lost half their luster when taken from the frame. Friends in prosperity proved strangers in adversity; he, who had hitherto been besieged with visitors and invitations, now found himself with scarcely an acquaintance in the world. He had written a book of poems, but although publishers admired them, they were afraid, they said, to risk their production; he had spent hours of midnight toil and daily labor over a picture which was sent to the exhibition; but it did not gain the prize—it did not even attract attention. It was really a production of talent, but it had come unrecommended—he had no influential friend to open the eyes of the managers to its beauties; so, it was placed in a bad light, and pronounced a failure. He produced two or

three pieces of statuary, which were really fine compositions; but those who came to look at them saw so many alterations and improvements to be made, that in seeking to please one he would spoil them for another. From time to time he received sums of money, which were inclosed in a blank envelope without word or signature; but he well knew the source from whence they came, and appreciated his uncle's thoughtfulness—for had it not been for these remittances, he would, indeed, have found himself in a destitute condition.

But what is it that he is just now so enthusiastically absorbed in? His fine, expressive face bespoke an intensity of purpose, a concentration of ideas upon the subject in question, that shows it to be a very interesting one; and soon a distinct set of features appears upon the canvas. They look familiar—it is the face of Minna Clavers! But what is she doing here in the artist's studio? Listen, and you shall hear.

Reports of the beautiful cantatrice had penetrated even to his retired dwelling; the love of music was an inborn propensity of his nature, and resolving for one evening, at least, to break through his clouds, and seek enjoyment in recreation, he proceeded to the opera. He might better have staid away, for this only added another to his catalogue of trouble. The vision of the youthful songstress enchanted him; he, too, waited with impatience to hear the first notes from a mouth of such perfect beauty, and beheld with disappointment and horror her sudden illness and abrupt retreat. His soul was filled with a vision of

beauty ; he returned home, but the lovely form of Minna floated even in his sleep ; it was impossible to apply himself to his usual studies, and at length he sat down and gave way to his inspiration. As he proceeded, smiles played around his mouth, and he became absorbed in drinking in the vision of beauty that beamed before him. The same look, the same expression ; and day after day he worked on. He had traced out the abode of the actress, and now and then obtained glimpses of a sweet face in the garden or at the window, which materially interfered with his studies.

He had worked at his portrait now for some time, and it was almost finished. He had not asked himself what he meant to do with it, or whether it were not madness in him to spend time and thought upon a face which never could be to him other than a creation of the pencil. He was an enthusiast—a dreamer ; and, wrapped up in the delightful present, troubled himself not with the future.

He sat one morning, with his brush and easel lying by his side, absorbed in contemplation. His eyes were intently fixed upon the dark orbs that beamed upon him from the canvas, and fascinated his very soul with a strange power ; and he sat silent and meditative—lost to all outer things. He did not see the door of his studio open—he did not hear a footstep close beside him—and the intruder, too, remained and gazed ; but on his entrance a hasty start, a rapid scanning of the portrait and the painter, and a softened look which gradually stole over his features betrayed his emotion.

He advanced still closer to obtain a full view of the face, and Walter saw with surprise that a dark shadow intervened between him and the object of his contemplation. He looked up in some anger at the intrusion, and his eyes rested upon a face in whose deep lines he could still trace a resemblance to the softened features upon the canvas.

It was Duncan Clavers !

Walter remained for some moments almost bewildered, scarcely knowing whether this was a delusion of the senses or reality. He had heard no sound, no footsteps, seen nothing until the figure stood before him, and the whole occurrence appeared to him in a strange and mysterious light. He did not speak; he hesitated to question his strange visitor, but remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon his face, employed in tracing the strange resemblance which grew stronger every moment. The face before him was not a pleasant one; there was something repulsive in its expression, even though softened almost to tears; and he sat waiting in some awe for the stranger to announce the purport of his visit.

Duncan Clavers had almost forgotten the young painter, and his own strange intrusion, in his surprise on perceiving the features of Minna reflected before him; but at length he turned abruptly to Walter, and said: "Young man, I must have this picture."

Walter, rather disconcerted by this curious mode of address, was yet provoked at the cool impudence of his visitor, and resolved not to part with the cherished portrait, he replied, quietly, "It is not for sale."

The piercing eyes were turned upon him with a threatening glance, and Duncan Clavers asked peremptorily, "How came this picture here? Tell me where she is!"

"I have not yet recognized your title to question me thus," replied Walter, with dignity; "and I do not choose to make this lady a subject for comment with every one. Tell me first who you are, and what right you have to ask these questions."

"I am her father," was the reply, in so sad a tone that it quite touched Walter's heart.

"*Her father!*" What could be the meaning of this mystery? Would the chapters of wonders never cease? He had heard reports of the beautiful actress, Mrs. Walton, had often attended the theater with his uncle to witness her representations, but no one had spoken of a husband—she was always represented as a widow; and indeed fashionable circles had often commented upon unexceptionable offers of marriage she had received, but mysteriously declined. The whole affair was incomprehensible. But he did not question his visitor, or doubt his assertion—the resemblance between the beautiful portrait and his harsh face was a convincing proof of that; and in explaining to him how the portrait came into his studio, he gave the whole history of that eventful evening.

The proud features of Duncan Clavers contracted as with a spasm on hearing of his daughter's public display and defeat; and, unable to suppress the signs of the emotion that convulsed him, he covered his face with his hands and remained silent. Walter pitied his agitation, and yet

endeavoring not to notice it, he employed himself in arranging his implements.

But his visitor at length recovered his self-possession, and in a subdued tone, he said, "You must pardon my unwarranted intrusion and abrupt questions, which at some other time I will endeavor to explain; but tell me now where they are. *I must see her!*"

Walter placed aside the portrait, and leading his visitor from the studio, the two proceeded together toward the abode of the actress. All looked hushed, gloomy, and lifeless; scarcely a sound was to be heard in the gloomy street, no form flitted to and fro within, and impressed with the gloomy stillness, Duncan Clavers remained for some moments in the spot where Walter had left him.

Duncan Clavers had staid on in his desolate home with feelings of anger cankering about his heart, as he brooded over the wrongs which had made his house desolate. The varied phantoms of the past came rising up before him, even in his dreams; and he would see the fair, sweet face of Minna Clarke as she first beamed upon him in her youthful beauty—and then it changed to the face of his daughter—*his* Minna, who looked lovingly upon him as of old—and he would stretch out his arms to embrace the figure, but then it faded away—and he would awake to find that he had grasped a shadow.

Dark visions came over him in his hours of solitude; and he thought of the bullet and the poisoned bowl. Life became a burden; and yet he shrank from the grave of the suicide. Even in his desolation and despair the regard

for appearances exercised full sway ; he could not bear to sink in the estimation of the world—to tarnish the name which had ever been associated with ideas of honor and justice. The thought of Minna still haunted him ; he tried to shake it off, and feel indignant at her desertion ; but he did not till now know the depths of his affection for her—even he himself was surprised at its intensity. He could not live without seeing her ; her mother might die, and leave her destitute—and although he tried to satisfy himself that she deserved it, the idea of his tenderly-nurtured child contending with poverty and want—left alone in the world of strangers, put his philosophy to flight. Perhaps, too, some feeling of remorse toward the fugitive wife may have softened his heart.

The newspapers told him of the destination of Mrs. Walton, the actress, and swallowing down pride, anger, and revenge in one tremendous effort, he arranged his affairs, and took passage for England. He, too, was a stranger there ; with no society except that of his commercial correspondents, he occupied himself with rambles about the great city in hopes of discovering his daughter. Chance had led him into the studio of the artist, and his emotions on perceiving the portrait of Minna were almost overpowering. There was a new struggle between pride and affection on hearing of his daughter's public exposure—but the good spirit at length triumphed ; and he found himself standing before the very house which contained the object of his search.

Public report had told him of the illness of his wife,

and he stood almost undetermined about entering the house. Should he ring for admittance, the menials would only repeat their order, to refuse visitors; Minna would not come to see him, and her mother would probably have him ordered from the house. He mounted the steps; the door had been left unfastened by some careless servant—it closed noisily—and advancing on tip-toe up the thickly-carpeted stairs, that gave back no echo of his footsteps, he passed on unnoticed to the sick chamber, and remained for a few moments motionless amid the folds of drapery.

When Minna Clavers returned to consciousness on that fearful night, she was summoned to the sick-bed of her mother. Poor Mrs. Clavers! the shock had been too much for her. Her hopes were raised to such a state of exaltation, that when the crisis came it left her bereft of consciousness, reason, almost of life. One wild shriek of despair rang fearfully around, and the crimson blood came pouring from her pallid lips, and stained the brilliant robes. She had broken a blood-vessel, and lay all that long night in a state of insensibility; while the innocent, heart-stricken cause kept an unremitting watch by her side.

She did not die yet—she recovered for a season; but she could not move from her apartment, and day after day, and night after night, Minna continued at her post. Oh, there is nothing so crushing, so overwhelming in its

sorrow, as the watch by the bedside of a loved one, our all perhaps upon earth; to see the eyes grow dim, the lips colorless, and the form reduced to a shadow! To hear the hum of the busy world without as each one proceeds on his pathway, regardless of the lonely heart that sadly watches the expiring taper—or at night, when a fearful stillness reigns around, broken only by the slow, distinct, remorseless striking of the clock, when in the last hour of life to the dying one, to sit and commune with your own thoughts, and gaze sadly forward toward the dull blank that spreads away in the distance.

Poor Minna! she was stupefied by the blow. She did not speak—she scarcely even thought; it seemed like a horrid dream, till she looked upon the fading figure, and saw that it was no illusion. It seemed hard that she, the innocent one, should suffer for the errors of others. Her hitherto luxurious and carefully-guarded life had but illy fitted her to bear the storms of adversity; she idolized her mother—loved her as she had never loved before; she had dwelt upon the thought of her from early childhood, and now it seemed impossible to part with her. Mrs. Clavers never complained—never told Minna that the scene at the opera had been her death-blow—but the poor girl knew it nevertheless; and this knowledge increased her agony. She wished that her mother had never cared for her—never sought her out, and taken her home with her—since it had only destroyed herself.

The bright star had flitted from its sphere, but it left not a vacant place; the new candidate for public favor

had glided quietly in, and "Mrs. Walton," the beautiful, the caressed, was scarcely missed. The theater was again filled with bright and blooming faces—with rank, and beauty, and splendor; again the walls resounded with the enthusiasm of a delighted multitude; the new favorite came forward, brilliant and smiling—the former idol languished on a bed of sickness.

The room was dark and close; through the gloom Duncan Clavers distinguished, at length, the outline of a reclining figure upon the heavy couch, while a slight, youthful form was almost concealed by the thick, falling curtains that shaded the window.

"Minna," murmured a languid voice.

The young girl glided quickly to the couch, and bent over close to the speaker.

"Sit down, Minna, close beside me—I wish to talk to you. I ask your forgiveness, dear one, for bringing you to this—for taking you from one who not only loved you, but had the power of rendering your life happy, to share my unsettled fortunes. The thought has often weighed heavily upon me, and I feel that I have done wrong; even my love was selfish, for instead of seeking the good of its object, I devoted myself only to my own gratification; and now that I am dying, Minna—"

"Oh, mother, mother!" sobbed the poor girl, in uncontrollable agony, "do not drive me distracted! I can not listen to these dreadful words—can not believe them!"

Mrs. Clavers was faint and exhausted, almost terrified by the violence of her daughter's grief; but she felt that

the time had now come when all illusion must be swept away—she had done with the stage and its mimic pageantry, and now looked steadily forward to the truth and the right.

“You can not remain here in a city of strangers,” she continued, “and although it has been an effort for my pride, I have written a letter to your father—to *my husband*—entreating him to receive and cherish his child—explaining to him that the fault was entirely my own, for I it was who took you from your home; I alone am to blame.”

“No, mother,” replied Minna, in a tone of decision, “I am to blame, if it *was* wrong to leave a father who had treated you so shamefully—driven you from your home and your child! Let me cast the letter into the flames; for I had rather earn my daily bread than appeal to the mercy of a father who has so outraged and insulted you!”

How the heart of Duncan Clavers throbbed within his bosom, as these words fell upon his ear! He trembled from head to foot, and even the silken drapery became agitated by his emotion. To hear his conduct condemned by the child whom he had idolized—whose life he had endeavored to make a dream of brightness, struck him with all the force and reality of truth. *She* could not be influenced by any selfish feelings; and for the first time the proud man experienced a pang of remorse.

“Minna, Minna!” said her mother, earnestly, “do not speak so, I entreat you! Feelings such as yours have

brought me to this—have placed me upon a couch of sickness, from which I shall never again rise—and made my child a wanderer and an outcast. I sought revenge, and I obtained it; but I have sacrificed my own life and my child's happiness in the struggle. Oh, why was I ever born with such intensity of feeling? But it was hard, though, to see the love which I had given him in all its strength and freshness, thrown aside and trampled upon as a worthless thing—to hear the taunts and revilings, feel the petty, stinging mortifications which were heaped upon me because the wealth for which he sought me had passed into other hands! I have sinned deeply, but I was not the aggressor; even on that fatal night when I tore myself from my child and all that bound me to home, a single word or look of love—even a softened tone would have turned me from my purpose!”

He could not remain there longer; a new light was breaking upon him—and standing suddenly by the couch, with a face pale and ghastly with conflicting emotions, he said in a tone of intense earnestness, “Minna Clavers, is this true? Assure me, on the solemn word of a dying woman, as you hope for forgiveness hereafter, that it was really love which prompted you to marry me—that it was the want of this which drove you to commit an act that will ever be reflected on me and on your child!”

So sudden and startling had been his appearance, that Minna stood gazing vacantly at him, unable to speak or move; but Mrs. Clavers was too exhausted to be surprised; she answered as quietly as though they had not

been parted for years—as though there had been no hate between them—no feelings save those of love and friendship :

“ I have spoken, as you say, upon a dying bed, and my answer now is but to repeat what I have just said. I thought that you *knew* this—thought that you deliberately trampled upon feelings of whose depths you were well aware.”

“ I never even suspected them ; I thought that you had only married me for my wealth, and why should I waste love in return for such affection ?”

There was a silence ; a new light had come upon both, and they remained communing with their own thoughts. The stern man stood there, to all appearance immovable ; but a conflict was raging in his bosom—a conflict between pride and duty. It would have been easier for him to sweep by handfuls his wealth into the sea—to bear unflinchingly any infliction of bodily torture—even to come down from his high estate in the eyes of men—but he did it at last.

The flood-gates of pride and anger were overflowed—the strong man was subdued ; and sinking down by the bedside, he murmured, “ Minna, forgive me !”

A wan, emaciated hand gently parted the hair from his brow, and leaning forward with a smile of perfect sweetness, Mrs. Clavers pressed a kiss of love upon his pallid face, as she whispered—

“ Duncan—my husband !”

The next moment he gazed upon the face of the dead.

Walter Lynde sat in his solitary studio, dwelling mournfully upon the past. Pictures and statues gleamed out amid the space, each one of which told its own mournful story. How many hopes had sprung to life as these chiseled limbs assumed a being and a shape beneath his skillful hand—how many bright fancies had glided into his mind with the beaming skies that glowed upon the canvas—how many cheering fires had been kindled over each successive production, by the dust and ashes of whose expiring embers he now sat mourning in sadness of spirit!

Thoughts of the old school-house, and his dry, chilling life, there came over him, and wrapped him in a cloud of bitter fancies; he must return to it—must become again the wearied drudge, and toil beneath a darkened sky, where no glimpse of sunshine ever penetrated. He gazed at his pictures as though they had been the production of another, placed them in every advantageous light, and then examined and criticised his statues, read over his poems, and wished that he had been the world to reward the young artist as he deserved. Then he thought of that beautiful face which had cheered so many lonely hours, and, turning to the picture, he uncovered it, and stood rapt in a blissful dream.

But then he remembered the events of the day; he thought of his visitor, and the unpleasant idea flashed upon him that he must give up the portrait! He had no right to keep it—to paint it at all, and of course no father would allow his daughter's picture to remain in the studio of a strange young man. He began to wonder how the

adventure would turn out; if the beautiful actress would die, and what then would become of her daughter? Her father would probably take her to some other scene and land, and he would never behold her again! What would he have given to be again restored to the pleasant home from which he had been so summarily expelled—to plead his love to the haughty-looking father as the heir of the wealthy East Indian, and not as the poor young artist! But then he almost smiled at his castle-building, as he remembered that the beautiful Minna herself was probably not even aware of his existence.

The shades had deepened into twilight, and our artist was so much given to dreaming and leaving his door unfastened, that it was fortunate for him that none but friends ever felt a disposition to enter. His dream was now suddenly broken by an old, familiar voice, which exclaimed, in hearty tones, "Come, Walter, my boy, shall we go to the theater?"

He started and rubbed his eyes, and then peered into the gloom; where he at length distinguished the well-known figure of his uncle, who again addressed him as though they had been separated but a few hours. "What, not dressed yet! Why, what does the fellow mean?"

Walter sprang from his seat, and in another moment had seized the old man with a grasp that well attested the strength of his affection. "Oh, uncle! can I really believe my own eyes and ears, or is this only a delusion to torment me?"

"*Delusion*, indeed!" repeated the old man, in a tone

meant to be gay, though the tears were rolling down his cheeks; "your grasp, young man, does not appear to me in the least delusive. Do, pray, take your hands off me, and we will leave this dismal den."

But Walter, although delighted at the prospect of a reconciliation, was not so easily thrown off and on from mere capriciousness; and his tone may have had something of pride in it, as he said, "I am glad to see you, sir, and feel deeply grateful for your former kindness; but until I am assured that you have laid aside your former unjust suspicions, I can not enter your house."

"So, you are standing upon your dignity, are you?" replied his uncle, while a certain feeling of satisfaction arose within him at this manifestation of spirit. "Well, suppose now," he continued, "that I was to invite you into my library, in place of this dingy hole, to hear an explanation of my 'unjust suspicions,' and then leave you the choice of going or staying—would you refuse?"

The artist left his dreams and his studies, and soon found himself within the spacious mansion which had been the scene of so many happy hours. The library looked like an old friend, with its wax lights and glowing fire; and in obedience to his uncle's request, he sank into a luxurious seat, and awaited his explanation.

"Walter," said the old man, suddenly, "you are a noble fellow. Many a nephew in your situation would have meanly cringed to my insults—would have sacrificed truth, honor, and self-respect to gain my forfeited favor—and endured every species of slight and degradation I

chose to heap upon him. You have acted differently—you have shown yourself worthy of my confidence, and you shall have it. This has been in part a trial of your real sentiments; for although at first I experienced some real anger, as was natural in a hot-tempered old fellow like me, it was by no means fanned into such a flame as I represented it to be. I spent many years in a foreign land, away from home and friends. I went there a penniless boy—I came back a wealthy man; but I left much behind me that wealth can never restore. I left the pure freshness of youth, the confiding trust in others, the unconsciousness of deceit and guile which are the attributes of happy boyhood—and received in exchange my first lessons of worldly wisdom. I loved one who proved false to me—I trusted in a friend who deceived me—I bestowed favors on those who cheated and wronged me. I came back a sour, crabbed, mistrustful old man, a stranger in the home of my boyhood, with no friend or relative in the land of my birth; till at length I found my sister's child, dragging out a weary existence in the confining limits of a country school. I loved you, Walter, from the first moment that I glanced upon your face; but I had become wise now; I had heard of young, dashing nephews, who considered rich old uncles an incumbrance, a restraint upon their enjoyment, and I resolved to be upon my guard. Your thoughtless words, which were probably exaggerated by the disinterested friends who repeated them, roused this feeling in my bosom, and for some time I gave vent to it in no amiable manner; but

even then your perfect frankness and freedom from suspicion had their effect upon me. I resolved to try you still further, and saw you depart in pretended anger; but I took good care to learn your destination; I have not since lost sight of you, and endeavored to prevent you from starving on your poetry and pictures. Now, Walter, say that you forgive me; dinner waits for us, not an article in your room has been removed, your old uncle is the same as ever—will you go or stay?"

What poet, painter, or sculptor could resist so many combined allurements? It *was* unromantic, unpoetical; but Walter acknowledged to himself, as he entered the comfortable dining-room, that luxurious common-place was really better in the substance than unsatisfactory romance. That night a fair young face mingled in his dreams, and he wondered if he should again behold his strange visitor.

Duncan Clavers remained beside his dead wife, absorbed in many painful reminiscences. He gazed upon the wreck before him, and then the bright, joyous face of Minna Clarke rose up in its young loveliness, and reproached him for his conduct. Such feelings were quite new to him, they had long been strangers to his bosom, and brought up before him his early love and Anne Wincot. *His two victims!* The victims of his pride, and selfishness, and love of gold, seemed gazing up at him with their pallid features.

That hour in the chamber of the dead was a solitary one. It held up before his eyes, as with a mirror, the many scenes of his former life, and threw out in strong relief his own unworthiness. He had almost forgotten his daughter, till

a convulsive sob fell upon his ear, and turning, he beheld Minna standing motionless at the foot of the couch. He held out his arm, saying, "You will not now spurn your father from you, Minna? The dead have forgiven—should the living be less merciful?"

Minna cast one glance on the still, beautiful features that reposed in their calm unconsciousness, and then sunk into her father's arms. A compact was entered into between the two in that chamber of death, and father and daughter were nearer to each other than they had ever been before.

The young painter went daily to his studio, in hopes of again meeting his visitor; but still he came not, while the portrait remained in its old place. The newspapers announced the death of the beautiful actress; and he feared that the father had departed to another land, and taken his daughter with him.

Some time passed; but at length a gentleman one day entered his studio, accompanied by a lady dressed in deep mourning, whose features were almost concealed by a thick veil. It was his former visitor; and Walter, at his request, uncovered the picture.

"See, Minna," said her father, with a smile, "I have had a portrait taken of you without your knowledge. Are not the features and expression perfect?"

Minna threw aside her veil, and though the face was very pale, Walter immediately recognized the beautiful features that had floated through his dreams. A deep blush rose to her cheek as she gazed in surprise at the portrait, and then turned to the painter.

"How did you paint this?" she exclaimed, "I have never sat for my portrait since I came to England."

"I painted it from memory," was the reply.

The young girl was agitated with a painful emotion. He could never have seen her except on that fearful night, and the remembrance filled her with sadness. Duncan Clavers noticed his daughter's agitation, and closed the interview as soon as possible. The picture was placed in his possession; and the young artist received permission to call upon them soon.

It would occupy too much time to follow them through the whole process of courtship, betrothal, and marriage. Suffice it to say, that although Walter gave up the picture, he gained the bright original; but he accompanied them to America before the ceremony was performed, for Minna could not bear to make new ties where every thing reminded her so forcibly of the departed one. During the last two years she had passed through a new existence; suffering and care had taken from her spirits their childish tone, and a tinge of melancholy ever rested upon them, even in her brightest moments. The old East Indian soon followed them; for, as he said, "he was now a stranger everywhere, and it made not much difference in what place he took up his abode."

Duncan Clavers never became a perfect man. His old failings were habitual to him—his sternness still clung to him, although somewhat softened down by the lesson he had received; but before many years he, too, passed to the spirit land.

THE WIGWAM IN THE FOREST.

BENEATH the blossoming fruit-trees the ground was heaped with snow-white flakes of fallen flowers that the wind shook from the overladen boughs; for it was early summer, that season of beauty, which, like early childhood, bears within its bosom many a delicate leaf yet to be unfolded—telling not in its fresh loveliness of autumn's chilly blasts and withered beauty. Beautiful and perishable as are the first fair flowers of spring! From the forest came the cooing of the wood-dove, and the soft, sweet breath of summer, that played among the leaves, whispering low like some spirit voice. It was a Western scene, with its warm and glowing light, with its wealth of clustering blossoms beneath, and its clear, unclouded sky above, that beamed with the hue of faith.

A mother stood at her cabin door, and looked lovingly forth as she watched the receding footsteps of her children; gazing till their little forms were lost to view among the forest trees. Hand in hand they passed; their arms now twined together in the sweet love of childhood, now stoop-

ing to gather the flowers that sprang beneath their feet. Then they would shout aloud and clap their hands in childish glee, as a bright-plumed bird flew swiftly past, or a brilliant butterfly eluded their unsuccessful springs.

Still they wandered on, and the mother waited anxiously for their return. Deeper and deeper grew the sunlight that rested on the vines before the door, and the noon-day meal was spread on the white table; but they came not. Again the mother went forth to listen; the tiny foot-prints were visible from the door till where they were lost among the thick foliage, and that sweet picture of childish love came before her as when she watched them go forth, perhaps for the last time. A burst of childish laughter seemed borne upon the air, and the mother listened eagerly, but no sound met her ear. Then she called to them, and the forest resounded with their names. As the never slumbering echo gave back the sounds, it seemed an answer to her summons; but the voice was hollow, and unlike the sprightly tones that usually greeted her ear.

Soon the father came from his work in the forest to partake of the noon-day meal, and missing the little arms that twined round his neck, and the warm kisses that met his return, he asked for his children. The wife tried to reply with a firm voice, though her heart misgave her as she uttered the words, "They will come soon." Their meal was eaten in silence, and the husband prepared to return to his labors, when placing her hand on his arm, the mother with faltering voice begged him to go in search of the children. "Perhaps something has happened; they

have fallen into the stream, or become the prey of some wild animal." Gazing upon her tearful face in surprise, the husband suspected that all was not right, and prepared to seek the truants.

In the mean time, the children had wandered on to the side of a small stream, and busied themselves in-throwing pebbles into its liquid depths. Again and again their childish laughter echoed through the dim old forest, as the transparent waters closed over the smooth white stones, and then reflected them upon the sandy bed beneath. Suddenly those peals of joyous laughter turned to agonizing shrieks that rang harshly upon the air, growing fainter and fainter, as though life and strength were fast speeding. The girl, in bending over to reach a gorgeous lily that grew just by the shore, had lost her footing and fallen into the stream. She sank—but rose almost immediately to the surface, on which floated her white dress, and the garland of coral blossoms that wreathed her dimpled shoulders offered a painful contrast to the death-like hue of her countenance. Again she sank, and once more rose to the surface—it was the last time. The boy gazed wildly on that expression of silent anguish, the forest resounded with his shrieks, and, in despair, he was about to plunge into the waves. At this moment a terrible crackling resounded among the bushes, and a noble dog, springing forward, bounded into the stream.

Soon the dripping form of the exhausted child rose to the surface, and proceeding cautiously forward, the faithful animal laid his burden at the feet of his master. As the

boy's eyes followed his sister, they rested upon a noble-looking Indian who leaned against a tree, watching with intense interest the motions of his dog. As the sagacious animal laid the drowning child at his feet, he took her gently in his arms, and placed his hand upon her heart to see if it still beat. Slowly the dark-fringed lids began to unclose, and the blue eyes rested in terror on the dusky face bending over her. The boy had unconsciously stolen close to the side of the Indian, and fearful that his sister would soon be murdered by her preserver, he resolved to fight bravely in her defense, nothing daunted by the stature and strength of his fancied adversary. The countenance on which he gazed, though possessing some of the Indian characteristics, was nevertheless one which might inspire confidence in the most timid. He was apparently about thirty-five years of age, and the eyes were entirely devoid of that red, burning look, peculiar to the savage; there was also less of cunning and more of mildness and intellect in the expression than is usually found among the Indians. The features were finely formed, and his figure possessed the prominent height and muscular strength of the savage.

Observing that the full lips of the child quivered, and her eyes were fast filling with tears, he placed her on the ground beside her brother, and with folded arms stood gazing on their inquiring faces. The girl clung to her brother for protection, who threw his arms around her with an air of proud defiance, and whispered to her not to be afraid. "Let not the child of the white man fear—

Yacota will not harm him." The voice was very sweet and low, and its first tones reassured the children, who no longer looked upon him as an enemy. They followed him to a wigwam which stood near by, gazing in childish wonder at the articles of Indian warfare that decorated the interior. The girl paused timidly at the entrance, afraid to proceed, but her more resolute brother grasped her firmly by the hand, and the two entered together. In another corner stood a few cooking utensils of European manufacture, and a couch was formed of twisted branches covered by a thick buffalo robe. The children paused to gaze upon each article, so new and curious to *them*; and a smile flitted over the sad countenance of their host as he marked their delight. "Where is the wigwam of the pale face?" inquired Yacota; "where dwell the children of the sunny brow?"

Not comprehending the mixture of Indian and English in which these inquiries were uttered, and losing their sound from the rapid tone in which they were spoken, the boy shook his head and made no reply. Again the question was repeated, and from the animated gestures which accompanied it, the boy was able to form some idea of his meaning. But as home, with all its attendant joys, rushed upon his mind, he threw down the shining beads with which he had been playing, and clasping his sister in his arms, sobbed forth: "Mother, mother!" The little one, forgetting in her new toys the home she had so lately left, gazed wonderingly on her brother, and tried to bind his curls with a band of brilliant-hued wampum. Yacota,

marking the tear-drops that glittered on the rosy cheeks of the boy, took him kindly by the hand and led him forth. Then taking the girl in his arms, he attached a small ebony cross to the wampum with which she was playing, and fastened it round her waist. Onward they proceeded through the forest till the footprints of the children again became visible in the cleared ground. "Farewell," said their guide, "farewell, and remember the Indian, Yacota."

In another moment he was gone; and hastening forward, the children were soon locked in the arms of their father, who, wearied with his fruitless search, was proceeding homeward in hopes of finding them there. The mother, pale and tearful, clasped her restored treasures again and again to her bosom; but when her eye glanced upon their strange ornaments, she shivered with horror at the sight of the cross. The child wept in vain as she was unwillingly deprived of her decorations; but seizing the Popish symbol, the mother flung it from her in horror. The father, a descendant of the old Puritans, and reared in the rigid customs that characterized the New Englanders, partook of his wife's dismay, and exclaimed with upraised eyes and hands, "A wolf hath entered the flock—in our own strength we may not withstand temptation!" The solemn voice of prayer was heard in the settler's cabin, and at the glowing hour of sunset, the incense of their worship ascended to the skies.

Whenever the children wandered into the forest after this, the little girl returned with a wreath of rare wild flowers, or a small basket of the sweetest berries, the gift of Yacota. Sometimes a haunch of venison found its way to the settler's cabin ; but these gifts were so secretly bestowed, that no one saw the Indian except the children. He seemed to have that antipathy to society natural to his race, and secluding himself in the solitude of his own wigwam, or wandering far from the haunts of man, he brooded over his wrongs. And they were many ; deep and bitter were his feelings as the phantoms of the past rose up before his view—they seemed to call for revenge. There was one that always came at the soft twilight hour, and with a sweet smile upon its face, and waving lengths of dark floating hair wreathing round its shadowy form, sat down by his side and chased away his gloom. Well did he recognize the face of Mahtanee, his lost bride ! There, on her green and early grave, the wild flowers grew the thickest, and thither he bent his steps when he left his solitary wigwam. Where now were his race ? Banished from their homes by the rapacity of the white man, driven far beyond the waters of the noble Mississippi, their hunting-grounds destroyed, and their names banished forever from the places of their birth !

The gratitude of the mother whose children he had saved, slumbered not. The Indian's deep reserve seemed to repulse all sympathy ; but there was one heart, a *woman's* heart, that wept with compassion for the isolated being. Then, as the thought of his danger rushed upon her mind,

as she reflected how he had been misled to abandon the religion of his fathers, and adopt the errors of papacy, she longed to turn him in the right path. One evening, as the setting sun gilded the tops of the forest trees, the settler's wife hastily left the cabin, and sought the wigwam in the forest. Now and then she glanced cautiously aside to see that she was not observed; and gaining the wigwam, found that it was empty, as she had anticipated. Tremblingly she advanced, and approaching the couch, laid a small Bible upon it, and then hastily withdrew. As she retraced her steps through the lonely forest, the light, happy heart of girlhood seemed to return; and with a feeling of exquisite happiness—a cheerful presentiment of forthcoming good—she entered the cabin, and began to prepare their frugal meal.

Soon the lonely heart of Yacota sought companionship in the settler's cabin. The delicacy of her gift left no doubt that it was a woman's; and that he should have inspired sympathy in one gentle heart, led the Indian more from himself and his own thoughts. He would sit for hours with the youngest child upon his knee, and gazing into its dark-blue eyes murmur, as if to himself: "They are the eyes of Mahtanee!"

He told them his melancholy story, and the soft eyes of the settler's wife filled with tears as he proceeded in his recital: "On the banks of the Illinois grew a slender wild flower, that day after day became more beautiful as the delicate leaves unclosed and expanded. Yacota saw this flower, that it was very beautiful, and it learned to look

upon him with eyes of love. Yacota was very lonely ; his father had gone to the hunting grounds of the Great Spirit, and many moons had waned since first they made his mother's grave. Yacota transplanted the flower to his own wigwam, and Mahtanee nestled lovingly in his bosom. When Yacota returned from the hunt, Mahtanee would come forth from the wigwam with her coral lips parted in a smile, and look tenderly to see if he were hurt ; when no wound appeared the smile grew brighter and brighter, but at the slightest scratch her tears fell, and with her soft hand locked in his she sat and gazed mournfully upon him. Like the graceful fawn was the step of Mahtanee ; her hair was like the raven's wing, and her eye the startled doe. The lonely wigwam echoed with the voice of a singing bird ; and, ever still the face of Mahtanee changed not from its sweet smile. When she was happy it broke forth into peals of joyous laughter ; but when sorrow clouded the brow of Yacota it was sad and mournful, and beamed lovingly upon him, like some faint star among the misty clouds.

“In the mean time the pale-faces had cast an envious eye upon the hunting grounds and noble forests of the Indians ; and they gave glittering beads, which they said were as gold from the mines, for boundless prairies and thick forests, which they cut down to build their dwellings. And the white men came closer and closer ; the Indians saw their lands depart from them—and they had no place for their wigwams. Then went Yacota to the pale-faces, and they called him brother, and handed him the calumet

of peace. But Yacota demanded the lands of his fathers that they had taken from him. Then they laughed loudly, and told him to carry his tribe far from their native homes—far from the place where the smoke of their wigwams would no longer curl. Then Yacota spoke bitter words, for his heart was full of hate, and he returned to his people. The Indian warriors painted themselves for the battle—they would leave no trace of the white men who had thus cruelly used them. Then came Mahtanee like an angel of good ; for while the deceitful pale-faces slept, the warriors would strike the tomahawk into their brains, and hang their scalps within thier wigwams. And Mahtanee wished not Yacota to slay the white men ; she said the Great Spirit would be angry, and his face would darken to Yacota as a stormy sky. But the heart of Yacota burned for revenge, and he listened not to Mahtanee.

“Then the soft eyes of Mahtanee wept bitter tears, but Yacota heeded not ; he painted himself for the battle, and longed to strike the treacherous pale-faces. Night came with all its starry splendor—and lo ! while yet Yacota slept, Mahtanee left his side and wandered from the wigwam. So quietly she went that Yacota knew it not—he thought she still slept. Then went Mahtanee forth in the moonlight to the pale-faced chief, to whisper in his ear that Yacota would scatter his people like the forest leaves in autumn time. And Mahtanee went on—a beautiful hope clung round her heart, and the Great Spirit gave her strength. She loved Yacota, but she

could not bear the shrieks of the white men as the deadly tomahawk sought their brains. But the pale-faces were on their guard—and as Mahtanee advanced they shot her to the ground! In the dim, misty night they thought to kill an Indian warrior. When Yacota awoke he found that Mahtanee was gone; and he followed her footsteps through the forest till he traced them to the camp of the pale-faces.

“What sight is that which causes the heart of Yacota to jump, and his eyes to start from their sockets? There, on the ground before him, lies the form of Mahtanee, with the crimson stream still flowing from her heart! Then the quick ear of Mahtanee knew the step of Yacota; and opening once more her eyes, she smiled upon him, and then they closed forever! And often in the night comes Mahtanee and stands beside the couch of Yacota, with the smile upon her face. But as Yacota stretches forth his arms to clasp her to his bosom, the smile grows sad—and then she vanishes from his side. Yacota made the grave of Mahtanee far among the tall forest trees, and laid her to rest with the wild flowers blooming over her. Yacota departed from the battle, and the pale-faces drove his tribe beyond the Mississippi—and the heart of Yacota was lonely as at first.

“Then came a pale-face with a solemn countenance; one who fought not against the Indians, and dwelt apart from the white men. He came to Yacota, and bade him be happy. He placed the cross in Yacota’s hands, and taught him to pray to the saints; and Yacota listened to

his words. They fell upon his ear like cooling rain in the summer time, and the heart of Yacota was comforted. Then went the pale face back to his own people, far, far beyond the great sea; he told Yacota to remember his words, and join him in the spirit-land. And when Yacota saw the child of the pale face, a bad spirit stood by his side, and whispered in his ear: 'Let her die for Mahtanee.' But the face of Mahtanee looked mournfully upon him from the clouds, and Yacota knew that it was wrong."

Long and patiently did the settler's wife, with a true woman's heart, that never failed, labor to convince the Indian of his error. Her mind was full of poetic feeling, which, though somewhat blunted by the rough habits of a settler's life, would now and then shine forth. The story of Yacota's griefs carried her back to the days of early girlhood, when Love first twined around her heart; and she brushed away a silent tear as those first fair visions of romantic happiness dawned upon her mind—now rudely dispelled by how different reality! But a Christian trust reproached her for these feelings; and when, after long and toilsome labor, came the reward she so earnestly sought, her full heart desired no more. And when in after years she related to her children's children the tale of Yacota's griefs, his error, and his happy death, the lips moved as though in silent prayer, and a smile of rapturous joy illumined her face.

A LEAF FROM THE PORTFOLIO OF A MATCH-MAKER.

FROM my Aunt Dorothy I learned prudence, neatness, and match-making. I speak of the two former attributes as a school-boy does of his Latin; he says he has learned that which has in fact been scolded or flogged into his unwilling brain—and of which, when emancipated from the terrors of ferule and dark closets, his recollections are extremely faint and misty. I can very well remember many a bright, unclouded summer afternoon which I spent within the precincts of my little chamber, darning with slow and inexperienced fingers the dreadful chasm which my hoydenish adventures among thorny bushes, and fences plentifully supplied with rusty nails, had made in the skirt of my frock. This task I always performed in a very dismal state of mind; for just below my window was the garden, with its cool, shaded walks, and innumerable flowers, among whose deep cups the bees played hide and seek—and within, was arranged before me the work-box, with its appliances of emery-bag, silk-winders, needles, pin-cushion, etc., etc., etc. At the other end my glance was refreshed by the prim figure of Aunt Dorothy, who acted

as sentinel by the open door; and in whose sharp eyes I read a fixed determination not to let me escape till I had completed my repairs.

So much for the lessons above mentioned, which were always enforced by such practical illustrations as least suited my frame of mind; but with respect to match-making, it was an acquirement which I had never been *forced* to learn, and one therefore in which I speedily became a proficient. Strange that such an advocate of married happiness as Aunt Dorothy did not enforce her precepts by practice; but it often happens that those whom the world calls "old maids" constitute the match-making portion of it.

Many were the matches which Aunt Dorothy congratulated herself with having been the means of making; and therefore it is to be supposed that when I arrived at a suitable age I was victimized by her ruling passion. Although not at all given to vanity, I acknowledge that I was extremely good-looking; and distressed as I must be at the idea of trumpeting my own merits, I confess that when allowed to have my own way, I was a paragon of amiability; yet notwithstanding all these endowments, it was considered the grand crowning point of my Aunt Dorothy's talents, when I drove in a traveling carriage from the church door by the side of the wealthy, handsome, and good-natured Mr. Farnham. I enumerate all the perfections of my "gude mon" in the exact order of precedence in which they arrayed themselves in the minds of my aunt and myself. I was generally perfectly amiable, for the

good reason that I was never contradicted or crossed, not even in my match-making mania, and therefore I prided myself not a little on my wonderful command of temper. But Mr. Farnham certainly did reason with me sometimes when I made myself more than usually ridiculous to promote the happiness of my friends. "Why not let these things alone, my dear Julia," he would say, "to take their ordinary course? Your acquaintances will come to the conclusion that they married merely to oblige *you* if you make yourself so officious, and will of course think themselves entitled to some return." But I only laughed at his ignorance of such matters, which I told him was natural in one of his sex; and continued to regulate the concerns of all my friends as usual, though I received little credit for my kindness.

Emily Westmore had been an old school-companion, and though some years my junior, we always continued on terms of intimacy. She was one of those girls who are usually termed awkward; and, though possessing a fine, intelligent countenance, and an eye whose power of expression I have seldom seen equaled, her features were rather plain than otherwise. In company Emily generally relapsed into taciturnity and resisted all endeavors to draw her out; but when released from the embarrassing presence of comparative strangers, she often astonished us by bursts of eloquence, and high and impassioned thought, of which we had not supposed her capable. When I add to this description, that she was poor, and had brothers and sisters so countless that when we entered Mrs. Westmore's small

parlor, groups of children seemed dispersed in all imaginable places, it must be confessed that Emily was a subject not calculated to excite much hope in even an experienced match-maker.

But one day, being quite desperate for an object on whom to exert my skill, I wrote a long letter to Emily, inviting her to come and make us a visit. This I showed to Mr. F. as a masterpiece of art, but an expression of blank astonishment diffused itself over his features, when he understood that I was about to take Emily Westmore "in hand." The object of my flattering intentions was herself to be entirely unconscious of them, as I well knew, that had I expressed my views, the young lady would resent the insult by her absence; for among her other disqualifications, my *protégé* possessed a high spirit.

Whatever he may have thought, Mr. Farnham said nothing on the subject; but gallantly appeared at the steamboat with his carriage on the appointed day, to convey my fair friend and her innumerable bandboxes to our country-seat.

Upon her arrival I fancied I discovered an improvement in her looks and manners, upon which I congratulated myself as favorable omens of success. Her face had lighted up into a glow that made her look almost pretty; and there was much more ease and independence in her manner than formerly. She no longer blushed and hesitated with painful embarrassment when addressed by strangers, and could cross a room without that timid appearance, which speaks as plainly as words can, that the

person fancies herself the object of especial observation, and perhaps ridicule. She now readily entered into conversation that displayed the powers of her mind, and I flattered myself that I should really be able to do something with her. Mr. Farnham seemed surprised at the change in her appearance and deportment, which could hardly be attributed to the effect of experience, for Emily was not yet nineteen. What with freedom from care, country habits, and a contented disposition, she continued to improve so much that Mr. F. informed me in confidence, he had no doubt that by the time she was thirty, Miss Westmore would be quite a beauty! in the mean time every single man who came to the house, was constantly placed in Emily's way; but I was not a little provoked that with respect to art (or what would have been termed tact), she was just the same as ever. When left alone with an eligible match, she not unfrequently took up a book to read, or answered only in monosyllables, till I almost began to despair.

If I was overrun by my female acquaintances at tea, my hospitable lord was always bringing gentlemen home to dinner, and we might with some appropriateness have displayed that immemorial motto of such places of resort—"Entertainment furnished here for man and beast." One afternoon after Miss Westmore's arrival, Mr. Farnham entered my boudoir and informed me that a Mr. Danvers was in the drawing-room, who would remain to dine. He moreover added that our guest was the possessor of immense wealth, and a high standing in society. "And un-

married, of course?" said I. I had laid an express stipulation on him not to bring tiresome married men to dinner while Emily was with us. "The very person for Emily! But now I must go and pay my compliments; and then for a grand effort—see if I do not succeed!"

Mr. Farnham exclaimed, "But, my dear Julia, Mr. Danvers—"

I impatiently waived him off from the conclusion, and descended to the drawing-room.

Mr. Danvers was a polite, gentlemanly person, of about thirty-five (a charming age for an old bachelor—men are mere boys under thirty), and as he looked pale, and had the appearance of not being in very good health, I immediately called to mind Emily's admirable talents in the nursing line. I pictured Mr. Danvers in an embroidered dressing-gown and velvet slippers, leaning languidly back in his cushioned arm-chair, while Miss Westmore, now Miss Westmore no longer, sat by his side and read politics aloud, or else diverted his mind with some entertaining romance; the apartment, of course, to present that soft, shaded appearance which results from Royal Wilton carpets, brocaded curtains, and carved sofas, and *fauteuils*; while the parlor pantry was to dazzle the eyes with its display of massive plate. I had already passed over, in imagination, the intervening space allotted to wedding-cake, bridal jaunts, and the honey-moon—not to forget that most important of all, the *proposal*—and had comfortably established them as a demure, married couple. At first sight they must perceive that they were destined

for each other, and with a little assistance from me, all would go on well.

As soon as possible, I flew to Emily's apartment, and seizing my unconscious *protégé*, commenced for her a toilet intended to be irresistible. She certainly had beautiful hair, but no one ever knew it, because it was always arranged like a fright, in a peculiar way of her own. Now, Emily was one of those provoking, matter-of-fact sort of persons who, had I said to her, "My dear child, I wish you to look particularly well to-day," instead of blushing à la heroine, would have calmly put back the glorious tresses that had fallen over her face, and fixing her steady eye upon me, quietly replied: "And pray, what for?" What *could* one do with such a character? Nothing but what I did; quietly brush, and braid, and curl—place here a rose and there a hair-pin to the best advantage, without intimating to the object of my care a syllable of all my castle-building.

At length we descended, and Mr. Danvers was formally presented to Miss Westmore. I felt precisely in the same tremor and agitation that a school-girl experiences at her first ball; but my visitors remained perfectly cool and collected. Mr. Danvers remarked on the weather and the pleasures of a country life, without making any egregious mistakes, and Emily replied in the same manner. I was thoroughly enraged with my interesting helpmate, who, instead of joining in the conversation at suitable intervals, sat quietly apart and gazed on, and listened to my predestined lovers, as one would observe a couple of cele-

brated actors, or a pair of nodding mandarins. What would Mr. Danvers infer from this conduct? He would naturally conclude that a conspiracy was forming to entangle him in a snare (men are *so* vain), and would therefore escape as soon as possible. In the mean time I showered a perfect hail-storm of looks, signs, and frowns upon the incorrigible Mr. Farnham; and when in passing him on some pretense, I touched his foot, in hopes of attracting his attention, he pretended to repress a shriek of pain, and replied to the inquiries of the company, that I had *accidentally* given him a twinge, villainously, like the gout.

Dinner was soon after announced; and while Mr. Farnham handed Miss Westmore, Mr. Danvers offered his services to the lady of the mansion. To this arrangement I could offer no reasonable objection, as it would not have been exactly *comme il faut* in him to have taken Emily, and leave his host and hostess to follow together, like Darby and Joan. However, I determined to watch my gentleman most closely at the dinner-table. In the mean time, I could have shook that Emily—and had she been my daughter, I should certainly have done so. She treated Mr. Danvers as though he had been her father, and actually spoke of old bachelors before him! I sat listening to the conversation in much the same manner that a condemned felon listens to catch the slightest hope of life. If that John had only been away, with his great goggle eyes, and mouth ready for a broad grin, catching every word that fell from a person's lips! Waiters are a terrible annoyance. Mr. Farnham watched my movements

with a quiet smile, that rendered me apprehensive of some of his dry jokes.

In reply to some remark, he expatiated on the discomforts of boarding, and said that "he would prefer an establishment of his own, although it consisted of but two rooms."

"I entirely agree with you," replied our guest; "its petty annoyances are innumerable; and I must try and persuade Mrs. Danvers—"

"Mrs. Danvers!" I exclaimed, and I fear opened my eyes rather wider than was consistent with the rules of good breeding. Mr. Danvers evidently seemed surprised at *my* surprise, as well he might; and Mr. F. was obliged to inform him that I had supposed him to be unmarried. Our visitor seemed slightly disconcerted for a few moments, but his habitual self-possession finally prevailed. I glanced at Emily, but she was discussing her jelly as quietly as ever, and I mentally said to myself, "That girl is a perfect automaton!"

The next morning, as I sat musing on the overthrow of my glittering fancies, a timid knock at the door of my "sanctum" announced a visitor, and upon answering with the accustomed "Come in," who should enter but Miss Westmore. She took a seat, pulled a rose to pieces, tangled my silks, and finally informed me that she was *une fiancée*." I gave a groan of horror, and feeling provoked that she was engaged without my assistance, found some consolation in supposing the happy lover to be but slenderly endowed with the goods of fortune. But in reply

to some insinuation of this kind, Emily remarked, with a sigh, that "she wished he was, and then she would be able to prove the strength of her love!" It seemed that the happy suitor was most perversely supplied with wealth, and was, moreover, agreeable and talented. Ah! now I could account for the brightness of Miss Emily's eye, and the improvement in her whole manner. She felt that she had been appreciated for herself alone, and this consciousness it was that inspired more confidence in her own abilities. This shy, awkward girl, had actually carried off, unaided, one of the best matches within Aunt Dorothy's line of observation—while I, an experienced match-maker, had totally failed!

But there was some comfort in scolding Mr. Farnham, for suffering me to make so ridiculous a mistake with respect to our visitor. He seemed infinitely amused, and laughed again and again, when I told him of my disappointment and Emily's engagement.

"Perceiving that your imagination had, as usual, run away with you," said he, as soon as he could recover his breath, "I was about to tell you that Mr. Danvers had one wife already; but as you ran to the drawing-room and immediately made up your mind that he was a bachelor, I anticipated so much amusement that I could not undeceive you. And I have not been disappointed, Julia. Only fancy Mr. Danvers, a staid husband and papa, handed over as the property of a young lady afflicted with that old-fashioned disease, 'disinterested love!' Let your friends alone in future, my dear, I beseech of you!"

I was now convinced that the first step to be taken in match-making is, to ascertain whether either of the parties is elsewhere engaged. This important point I had totally overlooked, and being disgusted with my profession, I resigned my commission to Aunt Dorothy, who still manages other people's affairs with unceasing diligence. I paid a visit to Emily Westmore, the other day, and found her comfortably established, just as I had pictured, with the exception of the invalid husband, and the addition of a grown-up sister, and two little girls of her own.

THE END.



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We do not know when we have been more entertained than by the reading of this book. It came to us unheralded from an anonymous source. We opened it, intending simply to glance at the contents, and if they were attractive, to lay the volume aside for future examination and notice. We had reckoned without our host. The first few sketches completely enchanted us, and we found ourselves spirited along from page to page, even to the end. The contents embrace short chapters, the subjects of which are generally suggested by the doings of the day in large cities. The thoughts are original, and they are expressed in equally original language. Sarcasm is a prominent feature of the book; sarcasm, too, of the rarest quality. It also abounds in wit and humor of the best quality.—*Church's Bizarre, Phil.*

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Salander goes forth, cultivates the acquaintance of one Duke d'Envy, and a war is declared upon Goodnaim, a person heretofore in the confidence of all who knew him. During the battles between *Salander* and his host of ragamuffins and Goodnaim—who stoutly defended himself—the Fairweather Guard and Old Friends of the latter forsook him, but Goodnaim triumphed.—*The New Yorker*.

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